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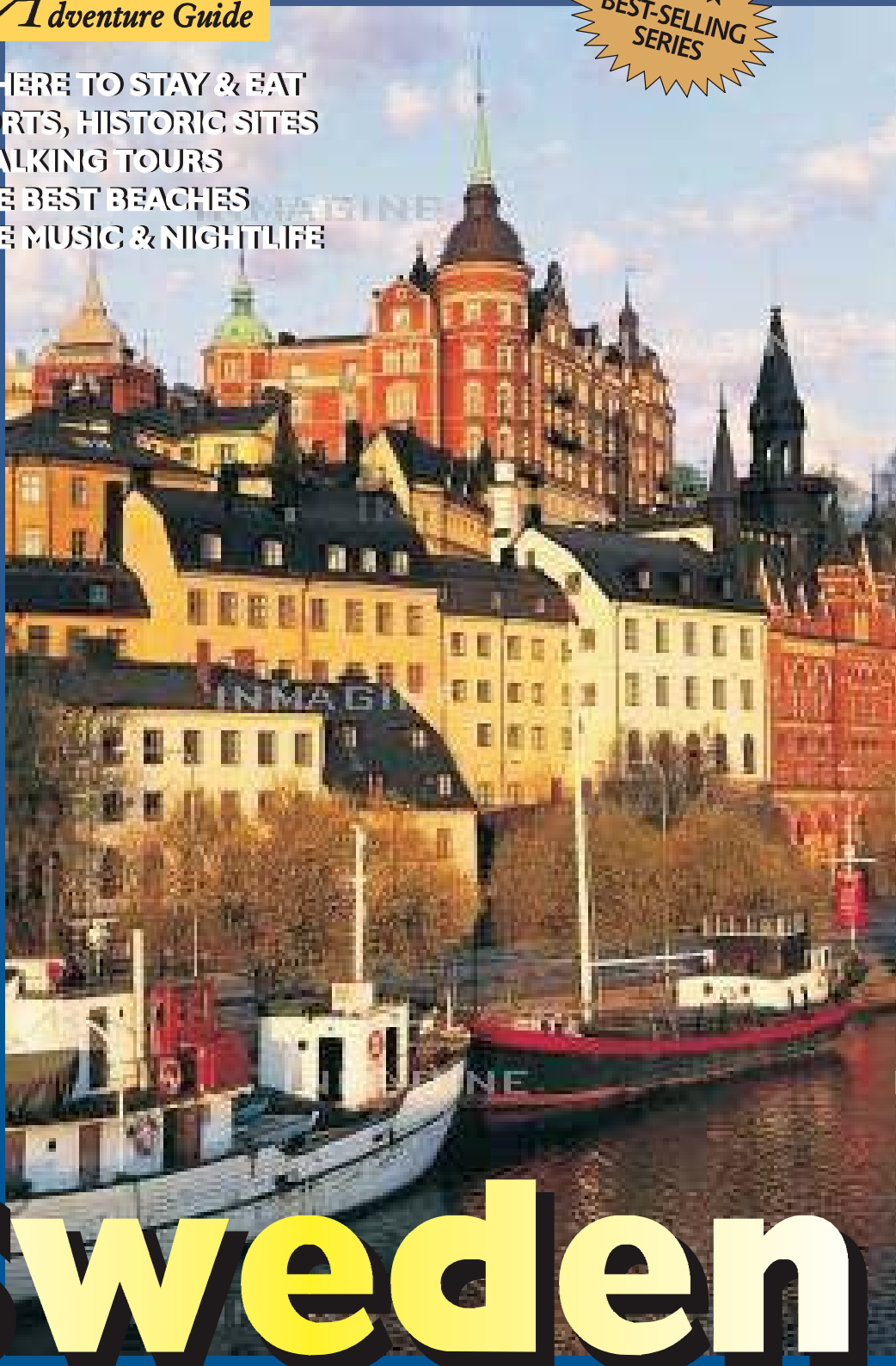

Sweden

Elisabet Olesiny

VISIT…

Adventure Guide to

Sweden

HUNTER

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Front cover: *Rape, road, willow in Skåne* (Hakan Sandbring, imagebank.sweden)
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4 3 2 1

Dedication

To my Swedish parents Astrid and Ossian, who encouraged my international lifestyle, but never let me forget my Swedish roots.

Thanks

To my American son Erik for his support and for his indefatigable assistance with my English grammar.

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N
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Östersund
Harnosand
Sundsvall
Hudiksvall
Gävle
Oslo
Uppsala
Karlstad
Stockholm
Örebro
Norrköping
Göteborg
Jönköping
Halmstad
Helsingborg
Lund
Copenhagen
Malmö
Ystad
Riga
Helsinki
Norwegian Sea
North Sea
Baltic Sea
Gulf of Bothnia
Gulf of Finland
NORWAY
FINLAND
ESTONIA
LATVIA
LITHUANIA
DENMARK
100 KM
100 MILES
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Introduction

Early one spring, some 30 years ago, I stuffed my beloved handmade reindeer boots with old newspapers, placed them in the basement of our home for safekeeping and set out to discover the world. I left the small town in northern Sweden where I was born and raised. Ever since, I have traveled extensively and have lived in numerous countries around the world. Still, something pulls me back to Sweden and I visit every year. Apart from the obvious reason to visit family and friends, what also draws me back is the visual beauty and the amazingly varied natural surroundings – the unspoiled wilderness, the air smelling of spruce and moss in the summer, and the soothing crisp aroma of just-fallen snow in winter time.

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Then there is Stockholm, Sweden's vibrant, cosmopolitan capital that, in the light summer nights, buzzes with life on the streets and in the many outdoor restaurants and cafés. There is the coziness of the extremely well-cared-for homes and the shy smiles of the reserved but hospitable Swedes. My youngest son, an all-American young man, observed during a visit to my native town when he was just six years old, "people here do not talk a lot, but when they say something they really mean it." Most of us native Swedes were for generations brought up hearing the Swedish proverb *tala är silver, men tiga är guld* ("to speak is silver, but to keep quiet is gold"). In this book I will share my native country, not only its past, present, people and traditions, but also some of its regions and the "Great Swedish Outdoors."

ALLEMANSRÄTTEN

Allemansrätten translates literally as "the rights of all men," but it's mostly used to mean "the right of public access." It is a very old unwritten law and a priceless asset unique to Sweden and its Nordic neighbors, Norway and Finland. The right gives each and every person access to any land, be it parkland, wilderness, or beachfront, and to all lakes and rivers, publicly or privately owned. In addition to hiking, biking, skiing, camping, and boating, it also gives you the right to pick wild berries, flowers (excluding those protected by law) and mushrooms – wherever you find them. However, with freedom comes responsibility. There is an obligation not to litter, disturb or damage anything, and to keep respectful distances from private

property. For example, you have the right to bike, hike, ski and go horseback riding on all land not cultivated, including private roads, provided you do not cause damage to crops, forest plantations and fences. You may put up a tent or park an RV for 24 hours, but for longer stays you need permission from the landowner. You may swim, moor a boat and go ashore anywhere, provided you do not go too close to houses or the areas are exempt from Allemansrätten (such as military areas and bird sanctuaries). You may make a fire, as long you do not cause damage, but you have to respect fire restrictions during drought periods. You may pick up and use fallen twigs, tree branches and acorns from the ground, but you are not allowed to take bark, leaves, twigs or branches from living trees. To simplify, "do not disturb, do not destroy and do not pollute."

There are minor differences between the rules in the various Nordic countries. In Sweden, exercise of the rights is overseen by the Swedish National Environmental Protection Agency.

Just over nine million people live in Sweden, a country about the same size as the state of California and just a tad smaller than France, which means there is lots of space. Located at the very top of the world, long and sparsely populated Sweden is truly a nature lover's paradise – nearly 80% of this nation consists of mountains, vast forests, lakes, rivers, wetlands and wilderness – and over 400 golf courses. About one in 20 Swedes plays golf. In this country there is a very special bond between its people and its nature and wildlife and an unequaled determination to protect and preserve. Talk to a Swede about the outdoors and you will be surprised at the uncharacteristic outpouring of emotions. A unique and ancient Swedish law, *Allemansrätten* ("Every Mans Right"), grants every person access to any wilderness area and land, even privately owned. The landscapes and the seasons of Sweden's 21 provinces offer residents and visitors an almost unlimited variety of activities, encompassing everything from speed and excitement to peace and tranquility.

DID YOU KNOW?

- In 1885 Stockholm was the city with the highest telephone density in the world.
- Sweden is the world's third-largest exporter of music, after the US and the UK.
- In Sweden more books on food are published per capita than in any other country in the world, over 300 in 2002.
- Stockholm is made up of one-third concrete, asphalt and stone, one-third water and one-third parkland.

- The oldest house in Stockholm still being lived in is located on Baggensgatan 27 in Gamla Stan. It was built in 1336.
- The biggest salmon caught in downtown Stockholm weighed 21.8 kg (48.3 lbs).
- The Swedish word for the archipelago is "skärgården," which literally means the garden of skerrets (rocky islets).
- It only takes the average person three days of ski lessons to become a very good skier.
- Only the female mosquito attacks human beings.
- Sweden is number one in the world when it comes to per capita banana imports.
- The lowest temperature recorded in Sweden was -52.6°C (-62.68°F) in Vouggatjålme, Lappland in February, 1966.

We will be starting this guide in the beautiful capital, **Stockholm**. This vibrant city, built on 14 islands, is more than 750 years old and mixes new with old in a most tasteful way. When in Stockholm, you should not overlook the unique archipelago, where many of the city dwellers spend the summer weekends in their beloved *sommar stugor* (summer cottages). From Stockholm we will go north along the **Bothnian Coast**, take a look at Höga Kusten (the High Coast), with its beautiful irregular topography and many off-shore islands, an area that was recently added to UNESCO's World Heritage sites. Reaching the top of the Bothnian Bay where Sweden borders Finland, we will turn northwest and head toward Kiruna in the **Northern Inland** – a vast region north of the Arctic Circle where the sun never sets in summer and never rises in winter. The long winters there can last from mid-October to mid-May. This is a region with unlimited opportunities to experience any possible outdoor activity summer and winter, and where you will have the privilege of visiting and learning about the indigenous Sami people.

Continuing south we will reach the colorful, folkloric province of **Dalarna** in Central Sweden, which is best visited in spring, summer and fall. In **East Sweden** we will take a look at "the islands." **Gotland** is Sweden's largest island, with dramatic land- and seascapes and the old city of Visby, an entire city now listed as a World Heritage site. The island of **Öland** is the smallest province in Sweden and since 1972 easily accessible via the long and beautiful bridge, Ölandsbron.

In **West Sweden** we will take a look at Sweden's second city – friendly Göteborg (Gothenburg), with a long colorful history, where in 1926 the Volvo was born. We will also pay a visit to Gothenburg's archipelago before we visit the two coastal provinces that make up what the Swedes re-

fer to as **Västkusten** (the West Coast). We will, of course, not overlook **Göta Kanal**, a remarkable historic engineering landmark, a 190-km (118-mile) waterway linking west with east via lakes, rivers and man-made canals.

In **South Sweden**, a "not to be missed" province is **Småland**, with its deep forests and **Glasriket** (the Kingdom of Crystal), where skilled glass blowers are creating incredible works of art. We will end our Swedish journey in the southernmost province of **Skåne**, known for its emerald-green beech forests, castles and long sandy beaches. The charming city of Malmö has, since July 1, 2000, linked Sweden with Denmark and continental Europe via the Öresundsbron bridge.

My hope is that you will find Sweden a great and fascinating country. Part of the allure of travel is discovering differences between peoples and nations. In Sweden, as everywhere in the world, some things might annoy and puzzle visitors, myself included. In summer there are the pesky mosquitos; the farther north you travel the bigger and more persistent they seem to get. In winter, the depressing darkness can get to you if you stay too long. The vast driving distances, with little to see but trees, can tend to get a bit boring. Then there is the uniquely Swedish *lagom* syndrome (not too much or too little) and the confusing "shoes or no shoes" custom, but more about that in the section on *The Swedes*.

Traveling within Sweden can be done by air, train, bus, car or by joining an organized tour, but do keep in mind when planning your visit that the driving is easy. It is no more complicated than taking a drive around the Great Lakes area in the US – and there are rarely any language problems. Most Swedes speak English.

Trevlig Resa! (Wishing you a pleasant journey.)

Travel Tips

■ Getting Here

The main international airport is Arlanda located 41 km (26 miles) north of Stockholm city. There are frequent Airportbus departures, a comfortable ride that take a bit over than half an hour and let's passengers see a some of the Swedish landscape. For those in a hurry there is Arlanda Express, a train that in 20 minutes transportspassengers between the airport terminal and the city. There is also an international airport in Gothenburg called Landvetter and for those traveling to southern Sweden there is Copenhagen airport in Denmark with a convenient train link directly from the airport to the city of Malmö in Sweden. For those traveling by car from other European countries there are ferries between Denmark, Germany, Poland, Estonia,

Lithuania, Finland, the UK. and Sweden. From Denmark there is also the eight-km (five-mile) Öresundsbron bridge that connects Copenhagen with Malmö. If Sweden is a part of an European itinerary it could be worth your while to check out information about the Eurorail pass that gives you unlimited train-travel in 17 European countries, www.raileurope.com.

■ Entry Requirements & Customs

Immigration is generally hassle free in Sweden, a valid passport is required but no visa is needed for a stay of less than 90 days. When arriving from a non EU country the duty free allowance is 1 liter hard liquor, 2 liters of wine, 32 liters of beer, 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars or 250 grams of tobacco. In additions to the above, goods for personal use to a total value of maximum SEK 1,700 can also be brought in duty free. Customs regulations are very strict so if in doubt contact the Swedish Embassy in Washington DC.

■ Getting Around

There are daily flights from Stockholm to most major cities in Sweden and a well working train system that criss-crosses the country, from high speed trains to vintage trains. If you plan to use trains a lot, there is a Sweden Rail Pass, www.swedenbooking.com. In northern Sweden buses replace trains in many regions. Rental cars are available in most cities both from major international car rental companies and from local ones. US drivers licenses are accepted. The roads are generally good, but the long driving distances trough dense forests can tend get a bit boring. Also do keep in mind that there very few rental cars with automatic transmission available and that in rural areas gas stations often close at 5PM. Sweden is a very bicycle friendly country and inexpensive bicycle rentals are available in many cities, check with the local tourist information offices. A good investment for drivers and bikers is "Motormännens Sverige Vägatlas", a detailed road map book sold at major book stores. You can also get around on water, there are all kind of boats and ferries in archipelagoes and larger lakes and on Göta Kanal. One of the best sites for travel within Sweden is www.resplus.se which covers trains, buses and ferries and both private and public transport companies.

■ Disabled Travel

There are in general good facilities for travelers with disabilities and most tourist offices offers brochures listing accessible general travel and accommodation information. A good source for information is DHR (the Swedish Federation for Disabled Persons), %% 08-685-8000, fax 08 645-6541, www.dhr.se.

■ Where to Stay

There are all types of accommodations available from de luxe to very basic. Hotels, castles and manor houses, resorts & spas, bed & breakfasts, cottages and cabins, farm stays and hostels. In general the hotel rates in Sweden are on the expensive side, the hotel standard rather high and the cleanliness unbeatable. Single rooms are regularly very small and the beds narrow. Double-rooms comes in all shapes and sizes, often with two single beds "pushed together". Keep in mind that many of the hotel buildings are very old and might not always be very handicap friendly (narrow doorways, no elevator etc.). There is no official rating/ranking system. Most city hotels offer special discounted week-end rates and also usually offer lower rates during the summer month's, with the exception of Visby on Gotland and a few other popular summer cities. Except hostels, the room rates normally includes a buffet style breakfast and always includes taxes and service charges.

HOTEL PRICE CHART	
Based on two people in a standard double room, weekday rack rate	
$	Under US$75 (SEK 625)
$$	US$75-150 (SEK 625-1,250)
$$$	US$150-225 (SEK 1,250-1,880)

■ Money Matters

Though a member of the European Union, Sweden has not joined the European Monetary Union. Accordingly, the Swedish ***krona*** (plural is kronor) is still the official currency of the country. On price tags, you will usually see the krona abbreviated as *Kr* or *Skr*, though the official international abbreviation is **SEK**. One krona is divided into 100 öre.

Krona banknotes are issued in denominations of SEK 20, 50, 100, 500 and 1,000. Coins are in denominations of SEK 10, 5, 1 and 50 öre.

The current **exchange rate** is SEK 7 = US$1; or SEK 1 = 14¢.

Foreign currencies are exchanged at most banks and a passport is often required. **ATMs** are called *bankomats* and there are over 1,500 of them throughout the country. All major **credit cards** are widely accepted, though American Express is often accepted only in more upscale establishments. **Senior citizen discounts** (*pensionärs rabatt*) generally apply from age 60 and above. **Student discounts** (*ungdoms rabatt*) usually apply up to age 26.

■ The Swedish Alphabet – å, ä & ö

The Swedish alphabet has 28 letters (the v and w count as one) and there are lots of words with either a little ring or a couple of dots above certain

vowels. Since the 16th century three special signs/letters have been used to indicate a particular pronunciation.

The most unusual is the å. It started out as aa, but the tiny circle above it was introduced with a printing of the New Testament in 1526. The other two were first written as ae and oe but, since the early 1700s, have been written as ä and ö. The Scandinavian languages are the only ones in the world using the letter å but the ä and the ö exist in other languages such as Finnish, Estonian, Hungarian and German.

- å is pronounced like the o in English ozone or frost.
- ä is pronounced like the a in ant or pass.
- ö is pronounced like the ea in earth or the i in birth.

The Land

Sweden, which occupies the Eastern part of the Scandinavian peninsula, is the fifth-largest country in Europe (after Russia, Turkey, France and Spain), and one of the most sparsely populated. The landscape, formed mostly by glacial activity, is highly varied in this long country. It stretches 1,574 km (977 miles) from north to south, about the same distance as from Sweden's southernmost big city, Malmö, to Rome, Italy, or from New York City to Orlando, Florida.

Its 3,218-km (2,000-mile) coastline borders the Baltic Sea, Gulf of Bothnia, Kattegat and Skagerack. Sweden shares land borders with Noway and Finland. After July 1, 2000, Sweden came "closer" to Denmark through the opening of the Öresund Bridge between Malmö and Copenhagen.

- **Area**: 449,964 sq km (173,731 sq miles or 111,197,421 acres)
- **Forest**: 54%
- **Mountains**: 16%
- **Lakes and rivers**: 9%
- **Cultivated land**: 8%
- **Highest mountain**: Kebnekaise, 2,111 m (6,926 ft.)

Climate

When the spring flowers are making their appearance in the south, the north is generally still covered with three feet of snow. Sweden encompasses more climatic zones than any other European country with the exception of Russia. This country – on the same latitudes as Alaska, Northern Canada and Siberia – is made livable by the powerful and warm Gulf Stream in the Atlantic Ocean that runs alongside the coast of neighboring Norway.

AVERAGE TEMPERATURE		
	January	**July**
Kiruna	-16°C (3.2°F)	+12.8°C (55°F)
Stockholm	-2.8°C (30°F)	+17.2°C (63°F)
Malmö	-0.2°C (31.6°F)	+16.8°C (62.2°F)
HOURS OF DAYLIGHT		
Kiruna	0	24
Stockholm	6	18
Malmö	7	17

History

When you look at the rather tranquil Swedish society of today with its high standard of living, it might be hard to believe that its past is filled with fierce battles, conquests and extreme poverty.

This part of the world was covered with a thick layer of ice 14,000 years ago. As the ice slowly retreated, man arrived. It is known that the area today called Scandinavia (Sweden, Norway and Denmark) began to be populated from 8000 to 6000 BC. The ancestors of the Scandinavians were hunters, gatherers and fishermen. By AD 600 the population had become a settled one and agriculture had become the basis of the economy and the society.

The Viking Era (790-1066 AD) was characterized by expansion. The Swedish Vikings headed east and southeast to the Baltic coasts, Russia, Baghdad and Constantinople, where they traded with the Byzantine Empire and Arab dominions. The Norwegian Vikings colonized the Scottish Islands and Ireland, while the Danish Vikings dominated half of England at one time. They all expertly used the sea, lakes and rivers to travel in their ingeniously built boats. The Vikings, or the Norse as they were also called, traded, raided, terrorized and colonized and were feared in all places they ventured. A lot of what we know about the Swedish Vikings was documented by Persian and Arab diplomats, who recorded their observations in great detail when meeting with the tall, blond northerners. The Vikings were not Christians, but they were religious and worshiped the powerful Asa gods like Oden, Thor and Frey, whose names were the origin of our weekdays – Wednesday, Thurs-

day, Friday. Christianity arrived late to Scandinavia. The Swedes were the last of the Germanic people to adhere to it, not officially becoming Christian until 1164 when they got their first Archbishop.

Of all the many important influences from abroad Sweden received during its history, probably the Germanic was most prominent. This took place during the Middle Ages when the Hanseatic League dominated the trade all over northern Europe. By the end of the 14th century the Scandinavians wanted an end to the German political and economical domination and the three countries – through inheritance and family ties – formed the Union of Kalmar. That was the only time in history that all three countries were ruled under one Crown, and it was Denmark that came to dominate the alliance. The entire period of this union (1397-1521) was marked by continuous conflicts and battles between the Danish Crown and the Swedish nobility and at times also the burghers and the peasants.

By this time Sweden had formed a national assembly (the Riksdag), which at that time consisted of clergy, nobles, burghers and peasants. In 1520 the Riksdag voted to burn down the fortress of the pro-Danish Archbishop of Sweden. That made the Danish king, Christian II, come to Stockholm, where he invited all the leading nobles to a feast. Afterwards, he had more than 80 of the noblemen beheaded – an event that became known as "Stockholms Blodbad" (the Bloodbath of Stockholm). It provoked a rebellion in 1521 that led to the seizure of power by the Swedish nobleman Gustav Eriksson Vasa, who had lost his father and three other close relatives in the Bloodbath. He was elected king of Sweden in 1523 and the Union of Kalmar had come to an end.

King Gustav Vasa, often referred to as the "Father of Sweden," succeeded in bringing about the supremacy of state over church. In order for the king to gain political control over the property of the Church, all Swedes became, almost overnight, Protestants instead of Catholics. This made it possible for the king to establish himself, and not the Pope, as head of the Church. Gustav Vasa also strengthened the monarchy by making it hereditary, and he himself did not neglect his duty in that respect. He produced 11 children, which secured the Vasa rule for more than a century. One of Gustav Vasa's grandchildren, Gustav II Adolph, became king in 1611 and proved to be a most successful military leader who, through conquests, some of them very violent, made Sweden a major European power. This period in Sweden's history lasted over a hundred years and ended with the death of another warrior king, Karl XII in 1718. After Sweden's defeat against the combined forces of Den-

mark, Poland and Russia in the Great Northern War, Sweden had lost most of its provinces.

The remainder of the 18th century, often called the Age of Freedom, was a time when science, art and philosophy thrived. In 1772 King Gustav III came to power. He loved France and the theater. French culture was widely adopted at court and among the upper classes during this time period. Gustav III, who loved to write and act for the theater, built Stockholm's Royal Opera House and the Dramatic Theater. He commissioned the first opera written in Swedish and created the Swedish Academy of Literature. He also founded the Musical Academy and the Academy of Art. His life ended dramatically when a group of his enemies had him assassinated at a masked ball. Giuseppe Verdi actually composed an opera about Gustav III and this event (*Un Ballo in Maschera*).

The Vasa rule lasted for almost another 20 years under the son of Gustav III, Gustav IV Adolph, whose claim to fame was a much-needed land reform, but he also led Sweden into many wars – the last one in 1809 when Sweden lost Finland and the current borders were established. After his abdication and after centuries of warfare, Sweden was economically impoverished and needed peace to survive.

Most Swedes will today be proud to tell you that Sweden has not been at war since 1814, when there was a military enforcement of the Union with Norway. Few of the the world's nations have enjoyed continuous peace for such a long time. The Union with Norway was peacefully dissolved in 1905.

With the Vasa dynasty gone, a French marshal by the name of Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte was elected to become the crown prince of Sweden. On his way from France to Sweden in 1810 the former, somewhat controversial, military man from Emperor Napoleon's army changed his religion from Catholic to Lutheran and his name from Jean-Baptiste to Karl Johan. In 1818 he became King Karl XIV Johan and a new long royal dynasty, which is still in existence today, began.

During the 19th century a number of circumstances radically changed Sweden, mostly in a positive way. The old parliament of four estates was abolished and replaced, the economy deregulated and land reform took place. In addition there was construction of nationwide railroads and of Göta Kanal, a waterway linking the east and west coast, which made the rich natural resources of northern Sweden more easily transportable. And, perhaps most importantly, there were the many Swedish inventors and entrepreneurs who set the stage for the country's industrial development during the decades before and after year 1900.

The population growth, which had been very slow going into the 19th century, largely because of the high mortality rate, now boomed. Healthier food became more plentiful because of the modernization of ag-

riculture, better hygiene and medical improvements. As a result, the population grew from 2½ million in the early1800s to over five million by the early 1900s. This sudden population growth was good for progress, but there was not enough cultivable land to support the population in this still-agrarian society. That led to a mass exodus, mainly to America, the New World. During the last decades of the 19th century and the first years of the 20th century more than a million Swedes left their country.

By the early 20th century Sweden was becoming one of the leading European industrial nations, a position that was later strengthened during the two world wars when Sweden succeeded in preserving an armed neutrality. Over the years the nation also embarked on a difficult balancing act to change a government by aristocracy to a government of democracy and then, between the world wars, to a social democracy. The first Social Democratic prime minister was elected in 1921. Then, when Per Albin Hansson took over the premiership in 1932, the social democrats started to implement the plan to create a welfare state that became known as *Folkhemmet* ("the home of the people"). The aim was to level out social advantages and disadvantages – based upon equality, fairness, solidarity, right to employment, environmental awareness and safety/security for all.

Economy & Government

In the mid-19th century Sweden was one of Europe's poorest countries. In the second half of that same century this started to change with the industrialization of the country, and, by the first half of the 20th century, the postwar era, Sweden experienced an unprecedented economic prosperity. This was at a time when most of the European industrial infrastructure was in ruins while Sweden's remained intact because of its neutrality during the two world wars. Sweden achieved an enviable standard of living under a mixed system of high-tech capitalism and extensive welfare benefits. Part of the success of what became known as "The Swedish Model" was also a highly skilled labor force, excellent internal communications and an efficient distribution system. The main industries today are iron and steel, precision equipment, wood pulp and paper products, processed food, chemical products and motor vehicles. Lately, information technology (IT) has been playing an increasing role. Privately owned firms account for about 90% of Sweden's industrial output. Only a hundred years ago this was mainly an agrarian country. Today, agriculture accounts for only 2% of the GDP and 2% of the jobs.

After decades of unbroken economic growth the first serious problems in the Swedish economy started to emerge during the 1970s with the energy crises, increased competition from foreign countries with lower wages and, added to that, some dramatic wage increases.

Even though it became clear to everyone during the 1990s that there are some serious problems with the "old model," the Swedes are proud of what they have achieved – and the country still features a very high standard of living and considerable social security. The current financial ills have a lot to do with a system that requires enormous revenues from the working segment of the population to sustain the growing non-working population. In 1995 Sweden became a member of the EU (the European Union), but has still not joined the EMU (the Economic and Monetary Union).

Sweden is a constitutional monarchy; its Chief of State since 1973 has been King Carl XVI Gustav. The Monarch does not exercise any political power or take part in politics. The monarchy is hereditary. The Head of Government, the Prime Minister, is elected by the unicameral Parliament's 349 members (the Riksdag). Every four years the Swedish people elect representatives to the Riksdag, county councils and municipalities. The Prime Minister forms a government by appointing the ministers and also decides which of them will head the different ministries. The last election was held in September 15, 2002, and the government remained in Social Democratic hands. Looking at the election outcome, a return to genuine social democracy seems to be the wish of the voting majority – this was the first time since 1968 in which a sitting government of Sweden increased its vote total. The Social Democrats have run the government for 61 out of the last 70 years. On October 22, 2002, Prime Minister Göran Persson, presented his new government consisting of 22 cabinet ministers, including 10 women.

The People

■ Emigrants & Immigrants

The Swedes have always been mobile people. Just think of the Scandinavian Vikings, who, many say, visited North America as early as the 10th century, long before Christopher Columbus' arrival. In fact, Swedes started to arrive in America in 1638, only 18 years after the arrival of the *Mayflower*. They were sent out by the government for the purpose of establishing a colony under the Swedish Crown in the New World. The first Swedish-Americans arrived on two ships, *Kalmar Nyckel* and *Vogel Grip*, and they established a colony in what is now Wilmington, Delaware. The colony was ruled under Swedish law until 1655 when the Dutch captured New Sweden and established the colony of New Netherlands.

In the first half of the 19th century the Swedish population increased in a big way after people got better at cultivating the land and began eating more nourishing food such as potatoes, which had by then became a staple. Also, vaccines for serious diseases were being discovered and there

was peace throughout the country. During the second half of the 19th century there were many years of bad harvests, and homesteads were being divided into smaller and smaller plots because of the many children. The farmers became poorer and could not afford to keep maids, and hired men who belonged to the landless working class. During these years filled with hunger and struggle, the dream about a better life in America started to become more and more common.

No. 5368
AMERICAN LINE.
INTERNATIONAL NAVIGATION COMPANY
PASSENGERS' CONTRACT TICKET.
SEE BACK.

Emigration started in the 1840s and grew into a mass exodus by the 1860s. An early ticket to America is shown at left. It continued through the second half of the 1800s until 1910, then tapered off around 1930. Between 1840 and 1930 almost 1.5 million Swedes left their country. Only Norway and the British Isles had a greater percentage of their population emigrate at that time.

Most emigrants went by rail to Gothenburg, then by ship to England or Scotland, and from there, by ship to New York. This was a highly organized form of travel with agents who, not unlike today's travel agencies, tempted people with exciting images and sold packaged trips. These agents were also helped by the offer of free land to the land-hungry Swedes from states like Minnesota. By the 1870s the entire trip from Gothenburg to New York did not take more than three weeks. From there, most of the Swedes continued on to the Midwest, with Chicago, where many settled, becoming the most important hub. Today, one out of 25 Americans has Swedish ancestors.

Much has been written about the huge numbers that emigrated during the 90 years between 1840 and 1930, but seldom mentioned is the fact that almost as many Swedes, approximately 1.3 million, emigrated during the 60 years between 1941 and 2001. Today, North America is still the most popular continent for Swedes to emigrate to; one out of every four emigrants move to the US, where about 100,000 Swedes reside, while another 50,000 live in Canada.

There was a lot of hardship to endure for the new immigrants arriving in America during the second half of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century, but also fortunes were made and immigration to Sweden actually started with Swedish-Americans returning to their home

country. Some moved back because they did not make a better life, while some returned with newfound wealth; and others were just homesick. After WWII, the returning Swedish-Americans were followed by refugees, mainly from Baltic States. Then from the late 1940s to the mid-1970s, various other nationalities followed, responding to the now wealthy, industrial Sweden's need for workers. In 1967 a law took effect requiring all non-Nordic immigrants to have proof of employment and a place to stay before applying for immigrant visas, with exceptions being made for refugees.

Until the Second World War, Sweden was basically an ethnically homogeneous country, with the exception of the indigenous Sami population (see page 19). Today, however, it is a multiracial and multicultural country with a mix of immigrants from all over the world. Since 1941, a little over 1.8 million foreigners moved to Sweden; over a million of Sweden's nine million inhabitants today were born in a foreign country. Immigrants from the Nordic countries and the rest of the European Union count for a little bit over half of this number, with the remainder made up of immigrants from North, Central and South America, Africa, Oceania, Asia and the former Soviet Union. This true ethnic "patchwork" has fundamentally changed Sweden.

■ The Swedes

At first glance, the many Eriks, Lars, Karls, Marias, Annas and Margaretas of this land might seem calm, cool and aloof. Also, as an outsider, you might feel they live in a country full of contradictions. Sweden is a country with a very high standard of living that happily mixes high-tech capitalism and a socialistic type of welfare program. It is a neutral country with compulsory military service and strongly promotes world peace, yet, at the same time, it is number one in the world when it comes to per capita conventional arms exports and is on the top five list for per capita donation of economic aid to the developing world. Further contradiction is evidenced by the fact that the Swede Alfred Nobel first invented dynamite and other useful devices for warfare, then instigated the world's most prestigious award for promoting peace. A more recent contradiction involves prostitution. Specifically, it is not a crime to **sell** sex in Sweden, but it is illegal to **buy** sex.

For the Swedes, it is much more important to be credible than to impress, both in private and in business. They are good listeners who consider it very impolite to interrupt. Silence is highly valued and there seems to be a need to agree on matters and to avoid heated discussions. It is also important never to brag or exaggerate. There is a unique Swedish word, *lagom*, which is frequently used. It means "just right." That is to say, not too much or too little, not too loud or too quiet, and not too cold or too warm. A common saying is *Lagom är bäst*, meaning lagom is best. None-

theless, exceptions to these self-imposed rules of not showing emotions can be observed in bars at closing time.

A very common topic for conversation is the weather, and with all the various seasons and many different climate zones within the country, it gives the non-confrontational Swedes a neutral and safe topic to talk about. Another good subject for conversation is the great outdoors. The Swedes have a well-deserved reputation for being good outdoorsmen. Perhaps because there is so much of the outdoors in Sweden, it is almost imperative that they become expert hikers, skiers or berry-pickers.

> **Did you know?** About a third of the population belongs to one or more of the over 22,000 sports organizations or 11,000 corporate sports clubs. The first Swedish sports organization was actually established in 1796!

An astounding 700,000 men and women take part in competitive sports on different levels, with classics such as the Vasaloppet cross-country skiing event, the Vättern Runt bicycle race, Lidingöloppet cross-country running race and, the most prestigious event of all, the Stockholm Marathon.

It seems as if every city-dwelling Swede's goal is to leave the populated urban areas as often as possible for a rustic retreat. There is an urge to be close to nature. In fall, picking berries and mushrooms is almost like a religion. Wherever you are in any woodland setting at that time of the year you will see lots of people with their bottoms in the air and little baskets beside them. The Swedes have a unique appreciation of the great outdoors; they are some of the most environmentally active citizens in the world, and they are expert recyclers. If you ask any Swedish five-year-old, he or she will know exactly which color bin is for paper, glass, plastic or aluminum.

The work week is 40 hours long, but there are also many paid "bank holidays" and a minimum of five weeks' paid vacation, of which four can be taken consecutively. This is all part of the Swedish social welfare system, a system that has worked very well for a long time, but now is in some trouble. The system is based upon tax revenues from businesses and workers and is supposed to sustain both the working and the non-working population. Net social expenditure today accounts for 30.6% of GDP, the highest in the world.

All Swedes and permanent immigrants are covered by national health insurance. For pregnancy, there is a "parent leave," which allows a paid leave from work for up to 15 months that can be shared between the mother and the father. The sick pay and parent leave pay is a taxable daily allowance based upon about 80% of lost income. There is also childcare for preschoolers at subsidized rates, in which almost 80% of the children are enrolled. There is also a monthly child allowance, tax free,

for every child up to the age of 16. For the senior citizens, there is a guaranteed pension from age 65 for everyone. Most Swedes also have private supplementary pension plans.

Some of the reasons for the financial troubles in this social welfare paradise might have to do with very low birth rates over the last few decades, while the baby boomers are starting to leave the workforce. The problem is aggravated by the fact that the Swedes' longevity is among the highest in the world. Today, the average life expectancy for males is over 77 years and for females almost 83 years. Another reason for the financial troubles could be the strong trade unions, which make it difficult for smaller companies to be flexible with their workers. Sweden has the highest Trade Union membership in the world, representing 82% of the workforce.

Since the late 1960s there has been an important emphasis on *Jämställdhet* or equal opportunity. It is based upon a belief that all people are of equal value, regardless of ethnic background, social class, race, religion and gender. The gender issue is based upon a 40/60% ratio between women and men. It is working well in the Swedish Parliament, which today consists of 45% women, compared to only 15% in 1973. However, with 78% of all women and 84% of all men between the ages of 20 and 64 gainfully employed, salaries are still not equal, as men still earn higher salaries in most occupations. Prison is one place where the men still dominate heavily; 23% of prisoners are women and 77% are men.

However, to the Swedes, equality also means paying your own share in any private situation and it applies to every man, woman, Swede, immigrant or visitor. Just observe a dining party in any restaurant when they get their bill. The bill is carefully divided and all pay their own share.

Swedish is the official language and the predominant one, with Sami- and Finnish-speaking minorities. English is taught from the age of seven as a compulsory second language in all Swedish schools. Many movies and TV programs are English or American and are always shown in original versions (with Swedish subtitles), which means children and adults hear the English language spoken on a regular basis.

Every second home has at least one computer and 95% of all schools have access to computers and the Internet. The Swedes are very open to new ideas, and the population has become an excellent test market for new consumer products. According to studies at the University of Southern California, it took the Swedes only four years to fully accept new products, compared to eight years in the UK, seven years in France, and six years in Germany.

The Swedes are mainly Christians, though most do not practice. Most bank holidays have some religious origin; although many Swedes do not know the meaning of the holiday, they are happy to get a day off anyway.

The country broke away from the Catholic Church in the 16th century and became Lutheran. On January 1, 2000, church and state were officially divided. After 400 years, the former Lutheran state church separated from the state and is now independent. Now 87% of the Swedes are Lutherans; this high number probably relates to the fact that before the church and state were divided every Swede was automatically born Lutheran. Now you have to be baptized to belong. However, even though the Swedes are not very religious and have extremely low church attendance, the church is still popular for weddings, baptisms, funerals, and at Christmas time.

The orderly and disciplined Swedes are excellent queuers, standing in lines at bus stops, theaters, nightclubs, etc. At many institutions like pharmacies, banks, and post offices, the lines have been upgraded with numbered tickets, but be prepared to stand in line to get one. This is especially true if visiting *Systembolaget* (the government liquor store). It has a monopoly on selling alcoholic beverages throughout the country, and there is an almost guaranteed wait if you visit on a Friday or the day before official holidays.

The Swedes love their homes and spend a large part of their income to furnish them. They also spend many hours cleaning and decorating, but they rarely open their homes to outsiders. The word for visitors in Swedish is *främmande*, which means strangers. Anyone invited into a Swedish home, most of which are family or select friends, will be referred to as *främmande* and all are expected to remove their shoes at the door whether there is rain, snow or shine! If you do not get invited to a Swedish home just take a look in an IKEA catalogue and you will find out what most homes look like on the inside. Privacy is cherished and outdoorsy Swedes who know the names of every little mushroom, berry and wildflower often do not know the names of their nextdoor neighbors.

The murder of Prime Minister Olof Palme, left, in February 1986, and later the murder of Foreign Minister Anna Lind, who died after a stabbing in September, 2003, profoundly shocked the Swedish people, who had been spared this kind of political violence for nearly 200 years. With that in mind and the fact that crime in general has increased during recent years, the Swedes still feel safe. In a worldwide survey, the Swedes ranked number one in that regard, with 85% answering that they felt safe when they were out walking in the dark.

■ Famous Names

Even with its small population, over the centuries Sweden has produced many famous names who have made important contributions to science, culture and sports.

On the music scene, the names **ABBA**, **Roxette**, **Ace of Base** and **The Cardigans** are known worldwide today, but long before them were the "Swedish Nightingale" **Jenny Lind**, left, and the great opera tenor **Jussi Björling**. From film and theater are "the divine" **Greta Garbo**, one of the greatest movie stars and female icons of all time, and **Ingrid Bergman**, the winner of three Oscars. Another movie name is the influential film maker and director **Ingmar Bergman** (not related to Ingrid). Some of Sweden's world-famous authors include **August Strindberg**, right, who wrote over 75 books and also was a talented painter and photographer; and **Wilhelm Moberg**, who is best known internationally for his four-novel suite about Swedish emigrants settling in America. Then there is the much-loved **Astrid Lindgren**. She is perhaps the greatest children's author of all time and the books about her most popular literary figure, Pippi Longstocking (Pippi Långstrump in Swedish), have been translated into over 60 languages.

Among the many sports greats are tennis players **Mats Willander, Stephan Edberg**, and, of course the cool, Nordic-tempered **Björn Borg**. Other athletes include the great downhill skier **Ingmar Stenmark**, and, on the golf circuit, the fabulous **Annika Sörenstam**.

Famous inventors include **Alfred Nobel**, left, who invented dynamite and whose will created the famous five prizes for peace, physics, chemistry, medicine and literature, with economics being added in 1968 by the Bank of Sweden. **Anders Celsius** was an astronomer and mathematician who invented the centigrade thermometer, later renamed Celsius. **John Ericsson** was the inventor of the propeller and constructor of the American battleship *Monitor*, which defeated the Confederate armored steamer *Merrimac* during the American Civil War. **Victor Hasselblad** invented Hasselblad cameras, which have been used in outer space and inside the human body. **Lars Magnus Ericsson** was the inventor of the modern telephone and founded the Ericsson telecommunications company in 1876. **Alexander Samuelson** created and patented in 1915 an American icon, the Coca Cola bottle. And not to forget the zipper. It was admittedly first patented by an American, but the Swedes **Peter Aronson** and **Gideon Sundbäck** first made a version that could be used for practical purposes (patented by Sundbäck in 1913 and still used today).

In architecture, notables include **Gunnar Asplund**, a big name among modernist/functionalist architects, and **Bruno Mathson,** who became famous as Sweden's most outstanding furniture designer.

Botanist **Carl von Linné**, left, born Linneus and known in English by that name, is recognized for his work, *Systema Naturae*, in which he classified plants, animals, and minerals.

Famous Swedish product names include **Volvo**, **Saab**, **Ikea** and **Absolut Vodka**, which was first sold in Sweden in 1879 and 100 years later became a phenomenal international success after it was introduced in the US.

And last but not least is **The Swedish Chef** of the Muppet show, who was actually modeled after a real-life Swede who used to be the head chef at Twentieth Century Fox Studios.

■ The Sami - Sweden

A Sami, by Giovanni Trimboli

They call their land *Sapmi*, an area stretching from northern Norway through northern Sweden and Finland, to the Kola Peninsula in Russia. It is not a country, but is the area where the indigenous Sami people live. The reindeer have always been one of the most important parts of the Sami culture and, since the reindeer have shown a total indifference to nations and their restrictive geo-politics, Sapmi has no borders.

The Sami, whose origins are prehistoric, are the original inhabitants of the Nordic countries. Long before the Viking culture developed, large parts of what is now Scandinavia were populated by the Sami. They were often in conflict with the Vikings, but they also traded with them and later traded with other people from northern Europe. Because of these contacts, the Sami developed quickly from a Stone Age society. Excellent hunters of moose, wild reindeer, and mammals of the sea, they traded animal furs and hides for salt and for metal blades that were used in the famous traditional Sami handcrafted knives that developed during this time period.

Sami in traditional costume (Matti Tirri)

Things started to change dramatically for the Sami after 1542, when King Gustav Vasa claimed all "unused" land for "God and the Swedish Crown." Then, in 1603, the first church was built in Lappland and the missionaries arrived. They decided that the Sami needed to be converted to Christianity from their animalistic beliefs (everything in nature from animals to minerals has a soul) and by the end of the 1600s the Sami were persecuted if found practicing their old religion. In the process, many of their musical instruments were confiscated and their sacred sites were destroyed. After silver was found in the mid-17th century, the Sami were forced to work with their reindeer in transporting the ore or risked severe punishment. Soon the Swedish Crown had laid claim to all forests, waters and mineral deposits and, in 1673, Sapmi was officially colonized when settlers were encouraged to move north and were granted land and water rights, as well as favorable tax allowances. This caused the destruction of the old Sami economic foundation and, as their hunting culture was destroyed, nomadic reindeer husbandry started. Many of the coastal Sami of that time had become settled.

Since then, through centuries of turbulent history and unkind treatment, the Sami have tried to protect their cultural heritage. However, as far back as the ninth century the Norse (Viking) rulers subjugated the Sami to taxes on fur, hide, and feathers. The many border disputes between Norway, Sweden, and Russia have had an effect on Sami-inhabited areas and the governments have tried to erase the Sami languages. From the 1850s until 1956, the Sami language was banned in Norwegian schools. Things have gotten better for the Sami in later years and they now have their own "parliament," *Sametinget*. But disputes continue about land rights and cultural resources.

The Sami used to be and often still are referred to as Lapps, but they prefer to be called Sami. Today, these semi-nomadic people number about 70,000. When Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia created their national borders, the Sami had to choose which country to belong to. All four countries have granted their Sami populations full citizenship, but Sweden still refuses to recognize the Sami as an indigenous people. In the Swedish part of Sapmi, which covers an area from the province of Härjdalen in the south through Lappland in the north, there are some 17,000 Sami.

The Sami have lived in close symbiosis with reindeer for more than 1,000 years and have been herding them since the 16th century. About 10% work with reindeer husbandry and, even though using modern equipment like snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles and even helicopters, herding still revolves around the eight seasons of the reindeer. There are an estimated 750,000 reindeer in Sapmi, of which about 260,000 are on Swedish territory. During the Chernobyl nuclear disaster of 1986, the fallout poisoned fish, mushrooms, and berries in Sapmi, and in Sweden 73,000 reindeer had to be destroyed. So far no compensation has been paid out. At that time, besides the traditional reindeer farming, fishing, hunting, and handicraft, the Sami began to get involved in tourism. The craft tradition has always been kept alive and, when visiting Sapmi, you will find unique jewelry, knives, and all kinds of unique objects made from horn, silver, tin, leather, and wood. Their beautiful traditional clothing with tasseled hats and bright colors of cobalt blue, red, and yellow are worn only at special occasions today.

There are nine Sami languages, with the largest counting 30,000 speakers and most of the others about 500 each. All belong to the Finno-Ugric family that also includes Finnish, Hungarian, and Estonian. It is a very rich language that has 400 words for reindeer, 90 words for snow, but none for war. One sami word is used worldwide – tundra. Today, Sami language and culture are taught at several Nordic universities. The revival of language and culture was probably helped by the arrival of the multicultural immigrants that arrived in Sweden from the 1970s, as the Swedish Government decided it was important for them to keep their cultures alive. One such cultural element is the *joik*, the unique Sami folk song that some say is an expression of spirituality, while others say it was started as a way to soothe the nervous reindeer. The joik had almost disappeared by the mid 1900s as it had been forbidden by the missionaries and it was also forbidden for Sami children to joik in school.

The Sami now have their own flag which was officially acknowledged at the Nordic Sami Conference in 1986, and they also have their own "national" anthem.

If you visit Sapmi, keep in mind that it is considered rude to ask a Sami how many reindeer he owns. It is equivalent to asking him how much money he earns.

Traditions & Festivities

Nature, changing seasons, and food, play a larger role than religion in the traditional Swedish celebrations, though most of the festivities have an ecclesiastical background, a fact that most Swedes ignore. Many of the holidays have been influenced by Ger-

man traditions due to the close connection during Catholic Medieval times.

When you live in a part of the world that is cold and dark for half of the year, you want to prolong all festivities that are built around warmth and light. Therefore, the most cherished holiday season is without a doubt **Christmas**. Leading up to Christmas is a month of anticipation when the dark winter days and nights are filled with candlelight. It all starts on the first **Advent Sunday**, which falls four weeks before Christmas. It's then that a special candleholder for four candles is dug out of storage and the first of the four candles is lit. One additional candle is lit each Sunday. The first Advent Sunday is also a day when all the stores feature special and elaborate Christmas window displays that draw big crowds. Most children will get an Advent calendar with 24 numbered "windows," opening one up each day, starting with window number one on December 1 and ending with number 24 on Christmas Eve. This is another German invention that was imported to Sweden, this one in 1932.

On **December 13** the Swedes celebrate a Catholic Sicilian Saint, **Sankta Lucia (Saint Lucia)**, but for most people it is just a celebration of light to brighten up the winter darkness. On the day of Lucia, all over Sweden there are Lucia processions in city streets, in schools, workplaces, hospitals. In this celebration, a girl or young lady chosen to be Lucia balances a crown of lit candles on her head, while her entourage of young girls and boys are all dressed like Lucia in white floor-length gowns and carry candles and stars in their hands. All sing traditional Lucia and Christmas songs and offer coffee, saffron-buns and gingersnaps.

After Lucia, most Swedes start to seriously decorate their homes for Christmas. According to tradition, the all important Christmas tree, still usually a real tree, is brought in and decorated just a couple of days before Christmas. The Christmas tree, though originally a German tradition, has been a part of the Swedish Christmas celebration since the 18th century. When Christmas Eve arrives everything is ready. Christmas cookies have been baked, food has been prepared, and presents bought and placed under the tree next to a Christmas goat made out of straw, a custom older than all the rest of the Christmas decorations. The house is decorated with special Christmas runners, wall-hangings, tablecloths and kitchen curtains. **Christmas Eve** is when the Swedes have their traditional Christmas meal and open their presents. It all starts at 3 pm when *Kalle Anka och hans vänner* (*Donald Duck and Friends*) comes on TV. The same Disney cartoons have been featured every Christmas since 1959 and have become such an important part of the "traditional" Swedish Christmas that over half of Sweden's population stays glued to their television sets for an hour. Afterwards, a lavish *julbord*, a Christmas variation of the famous Swedish smörgåsbord buffet, is served. Dishes include pickled herrings in a variety of guises, liver paté, terrines, pickled

beets, small meatballs, and Janssons temptation (potatoes, onion, anchovies and heavy cream au gratin), along with sweet, dark rye bread. The centerpiece is usually a huge Christmas ham and there are pig's feet, pork spare ribs, sausages and *lutfisk*, a Scandinavian Christmas specialty made with unsalted dried cod. These days many will wait and have the *lutfisk* on Christmas Day. For dessert, many families have *ris-a-la-malta* (a chilled dessert made out of boiled rice, whipped cream and oranges). The food is often accompanied with *julöl* (Christmas beer – all breweries make their own) and *julmust*, a softdrink that dates back to 1910 and is only available at Christmas time. Later, Santa arrives and the Christmas presents are opened.

Christmas Day starts at 7 am with *Julotta*, a traditional Christmas service in candlelit churches. Lately, this early-morning service has started being replaced by a late, "just before midnight" service on Christmas Eve. On Christmas Day there are usually big, late family lunches and many eat *lutfisk*. Back in the old days, the dried cod was traditionally soaked in cold water for eight days, then soaked again for two days in a mixture of water and potash lye, then once again soaked in fresh water, and finally, simmered for about 15 minutes. These days the *lutfisk* is most often bought fully prepared, ready to boil, and to be enjoyed with allspice, white sauce (béchamel) and boiled potatoes. Many families make a big roast or just feast on leftovers from the *julbord*. In Sweden there is a "second day of Christmas" (December 26), which is also a bank holiday and a day to just relax.

New Year's Eve is celebrated as it is everywhere else, with people out and about drinking champagne, making up New Year's resolutions and, in the bigger cities, there are displays of elaborate fireworks.

On **January 13**, Christmas is officially over. Traditionally, this was the day the tree was thrown out and the Christmas decorations taken down and put away. No one really knows why Christmas in Sweden lasts so long, but maybe the festive lights and decorations help to deal with the dark midwinter months. Even though many get rid of the tree right after New Year's these days, the candles remain lit throughout the year. Candles, so important in Sweden, date back to the Romans but have been factory-made in Sweden since the early 1800s.

In **mid-February** there is a week of school holidays in Sweden. The specific weeks vary in different regions, but it is a time when many families take to the slopes for a ski vacation at one of the Swedish ski resorts or in the Alps.

Easter is also a popular time to take a week off for skiing or for traveling abroad to a sunny destination. For those staying at home, Easter is mostly about eating and painting eggs. The homes are decorated with *påskris*, which are birch sprigs decorated with brightly colored chicken feathers mixed with willow osier twigs, bright yellow daffodils and tulips,

and purple iris. For the Easter meals, apart from eggs, there is salmon in every shape and form and also lamb as of late. Children often receive a bright and shiny colored egg made out of cardboard filled with all kinds of Easter candy.

On the **last day of April**, **Valborgsmässoafton (Walpurgis Night)** is celebrated with a big bonfire. Students young and old sport their white graduation hats, while singing songs celebrating the arrival of spring. Everybody comes out of their homes on Valborgsmässoafton. Come rain, snow or shine, you have to be outdoors in anticipation of spring's first feeble rays of sun.

Since 1916, **June 6** has been celebrated as **Svenska Flaggans Dag (Swedish Flag Day)**. In 1983 it became the official National Day, but has been a regular workday until now. Finally, in 2005, June 6 became a bank holiday. The flagpoles, and there are many of them in Sweden, all proudly display the yellow and blue flags. Why June 6? The reason is two-fold. First, it was the date Gustav Vasa was elected king in 1532 and laid the foundation for Sweden as a separate state. Second, on the same date in 1809, Sweden adopted a new constitution that established civil rights and liberties.

Another time when the skies are filled with Swedish flags is **Midsummer**, celebrated on the weekend that falls closest to **June 24**. The real Midsummer Day is when the nights are the lightest. Midsummer is one of the few Swedish holidays with no religious history behind it. The province of Dalarna is the most famous for its Midsummer festivities, but it is celebrated all over Sweden. It dates back to prehistoric German and French medieval solstice celebrations when, in May, poles were erected. In Sweden, they became Midsummer poles in June. On Midsummer's Eve everybody heads for an open field, or *hembygsgård*, and helps decorate the pole with birch leaves and freshly picked wild flowers. *Hembygsgårdar* comprise one or more historic regional houses and can be found in almost any city, town, and in the larger villages. There are games and dances around the poles during the afternoon and many, young and old, are dressed in traditional folk costumes. There are a wealth of costimes in Sweden, including National costumes, Provincial costumes, Parish costumes, and folk dance costumes, all in bright colors and all different. This is one of the most special celebrations and a time to enjoy the long light nights, and in the north, the fabulous midnight sun. It is a weekend when most Swedes head for the countryside and many to their beloved *sommarstuga* (summer cottage). The food of choice is gravlax, pickled herring with sour cream and chives, and new potatoes with dill. This is accompanied with lots of beer and snaps and, for dessert, there are fresh summer berries.

Throughout the summer there are **outdoor auctions**, a common weekend occurrence all around Sweden and a local social event. Even though

it might be difficult for foreigners to understand the fast-talking auctioneers, it is a great opportunity to visit with the locals.

August is the time for ***kräft skivor*** **(crayfish parties)**, which are celebrated all over Sweden. It is a tradition that dates back to the end of the 19th century, a time when the Swedish crayfish were in such high demand in Europe that the government had to ban harvesting for many months out of the year. The legal harvesting season started August 1 and the Swedes celebrated. The Swedish crayfish are still rare and considered the best. However, there is high demand for the little crustaceans so now there is a considerable import from Turkey and USA (mainly Louisiana), where they are cooked according to Swedish wishes in salted water and lots of dill. The crayfish parties are also the unofficial goodbye to Sweden's short summer. It is usually the last outdoor party for the season, with lots of happy, paper decorations. The participants wear silly paper bibs and equally silly paper hats, but after a couple of drinks (*akvavits*), the orderly and correct Swedes feel perfectly happy. This is a ritual meal and it is an art to eat the little bright red crustaceans the proper way.

If crayfish parties announce the end of summer, foul smelling ***surströmming*** **parties (fermented Baltic herring)** in the north and ***ålalagillen*** **(eel parties)** in the south announce the beginning of fall, usually occurring at the **end of August or beginning of September**. In the north, *surströmming* is looked upon as a culinary delicacy. It is actually Baltic herring fermented in tin cans. The tradition dates back to a time when it was cheaper to preserve the herring by fermenting it than to store it in salt. When the tins are opened, a pungent smell pervades the air; they should be opened outdoors if possible. The herring is traditionally served with *mandelpotatis* (a north Sweden special yellow, almond-shaped potato), *tunnbröd* bread, and homemade goat cheese, all washed down with snaps and beer. Many real *surströmming* connoisseurs prefer to drink cold milk with the meal. In the south, *ålagillen*, eel parties, have been held this time of the year for over 100 years. It is the time when the eels start to leave their rivers for the yearly journey to the Sargasso Sea. The eel is served in all shapes and forms: fried, boiled, smoked, grilled, and stuffed. It is said that the fatty eel is easier to digest with the help of snaps and beer.

SNAPS

Japanese drink sake, Greeks enjoy ouzo and Swedes love their snaps. Snaps is hard liquor, often seasoned vodka, served in small shot glasses and, after singing a silly snaps-song together with the others around the table, the contents of the glass is swallowed in one gulp and then chased with beer.

Fall is also the time for picking mushrooms of all varieties as well as berries. The bright red lingon berries (tasting like cranberries) are a traditional staple in Swedish cuisine and found all over Sweden. In the northern part, the highly valued golden *hjortron* (cloud-berries) can be found on swampy lands and they are so sought after that they are called *skogens guld*, the gold of the forest.

On **November 10**, in the southernmost province of Skåne there is also a unique Swedish tradition of **Saint Martins Day, *Mårten Gås***, that is celebrated. Fat roasted geese are served, followed by a Skåne special dessert called *spettkaka*, a multi-foot-high lacey construction made of egg yolks and sugar and baked on a skewer. Many also start off the meal with a bowl of *svartsoppa*, a black spiced, sweet and sour soup made of goose or pig blood.

Then, by the end of November, the much anticipated time leading up to Christmas starts all over again.

In the last few years the mass media and commercial interests have been trying hard to get new imports like Valentine's Day and Halloween to be accepted as Swedish traditions.

■ Year-Round Traditions

The **sauna**, which has always been important in the Nordic countries, dates back at least a thousand years. It used to be called *badstuga* in Swedish, but now the Finnish word sauna is used. No one really knows where and when it originated, but many cultures have had their own version of "sweat baths," like the Russian *bania*, the Turkish *hamam*, and the Native American sweat lodges, to name a few. In Sweden, the sauna is used religiously year-round and all over the country at ski resorts, often followed by a roll in the snow, or at summer retreats followed by a dip in a cool, clear lake.

Birthdays are much celebrated, especially at age 30 and afterward, when every 10 years marks a special celebration. In addition to birthdays, in the Swedish calendar on each day of the year one or two first names are featured. For example, Elisabet is on November 19. Those **name days** are celebrated by family and friends with cake and/or presents.

The Swedes love their frequent **coffee breaks** when coffee is almost always served with *kaffe bröd*, cinnamon buns, cakes and/or cookies. They gave these breaks a special name, *fika* (pronounced feeka).

Smörgåsbord is a very Swedish "invention" that was actually modeled after a Russian custom of serving an array of small dishes before the main meal. It is a lavish buffet spread, with cold and hot dishes as well as desserts, all traditional Swedish food items. It is very similar to the *julbord* (the Christmas table), though without the Christmas ham, the

pig's feet, and the *lutfisk*. The *smögåsbord* unfortunately seems to be disappearing, but is still served at some country inns and city hotels, as well as on the ferries between Sweden and Finland. The most famous and upscale *smögåsbord* is found at Grand Hotel in Stockholm.

Traditional Swedish food is somewhat sweet. There is sugar in everything from bread to gravlax (fresh salmon marinated in salt, sugar and sprigs of fresh dill) and pickled herrings. Sweet jams and jellies are commonly served with everything from meatballs to arctic venison (reindeer). Split-pea soup, a Thursday tradition, is made with salted pork and served with a glass of very sweet *punsch* liqueur. Not to be overlooked are all the deliciously sweet dessert concoctions.

The traditional **church wedding** has made a big comeback. The Swedes often get married after having cohabited for years and often after having children. At the engagement, both the bride- and groom-to-be receive rings. At the wedding, only the bride gets a ring. Whitsun/Pentecoast and Midsummer are the most popular times of the year to get married.

Funerals are becoming simpler and more private events, and so are the receptions. Sweden has some of the most amazingly beautiful and well-kept graveyards in the world. The graves are tastefully decorated with live flowers in the summer and are lit up by candles in the winter. They are especially beautiful on All Saints Day and at Christmas.

All year-round, at the most festive occasions, the alcoholic drink called snaps is served. Snaps is the common word for *bränvin* and *akvavit*, which are principally flavored with caraway, but there is also snaps made with anise, fennel, cardamom and cinnamon. The snaps is usually chased down with beer, and at most occasions, when snaps is being served, traditional songs called *snapsvisor* are sung. At all somewhat formal dinner events there are speeches and lots of rules to observe around the toast, *skål* – how to drink, when to drink, how high to lift the glass, when to set the glass down.

Then there is the word *tack*, meaning thank you, that the Swedes use more than any other nationality. At all somewhat formal dinners or lunches there are thank you speeches and the following day guests are supposed to acknowledge the invitation by a thank you note or thank you call. Also, the next time you meet the host or hostess in person you have to remember to say *tack för senast* ("thank you for last time"). Children are being taught to say *tack för mat* (thank you for the food) at all meals when leaving the dinner table. Still, in this land of thank you's, there is no word for please. But the Swedes have a solution. Where in English you would use a "please" in the beginning of a sentence, in Swedish just exchange it with a "tack" at the end of the sentence, thank you.

The Great Outdoors

If your idea of the great outdoors is a cold tropical drink on a hot sandy beach and an azure blue ocean, then Sweden might not be the place for you. However, if you enjoy rugged untamed wilderness and unlimited places where you can wander for hours without meeting a soul, this might be the place for you.

In this vast country with few inhabitants, access to nature is easy. Even in central Stockholm, no one is more than 20 minutes from major parklands or more than 10 minutes from water. Sweden is a country where inhabitants and visitors alike enjoy "the right of public access," called *Allemansrätten* in Swedish. It is a unique privilege that insures that all the territory is accessible and it entitles everybody to freedom in the great outdoors. At the same time, you have to show consideration not to infringe upon the freedom of others. (See page 1, Allemansrätten).

In spring and summer you can pedal and paddle in peaceful and inspiring surroundings along any of the seemingly unlimited miles of canoe and bike routes. You can raft a rough Swedish river or go horseback riding on wooded trails with sparkling lakeside views. You can go hiking along nature trails in one or more of the 28 National Parks, some with rustic beauty that captivate the spirit and others where you feel as if you have stumbled into a painting of silvery birch and emerald green beech trees. You can stroll endless beaches along breathtaking shorelines or go fishing at any of the more than 100,000 lakes or innumerable rivers and streams. Sportfishing with hand gear is free along the seashores and along the shores of the five largest lakes: **Vänern**, **Vättern**, **Mälaren**, **Storsjön** and **Hjälmaren**. Elsewhere a fishing permit is required.

And there is golf, with green fairways on long, light summer nights or winter golf in the snow. About one in 20 Swedes plays golf, the highest percentage anywhere in the world, and there are nearly 450 golf courses, including Björkliden, which is the northernmost golf course on the planet.

In fall, the flamboyant colors of the woods and the mountains shrouded in mist give any hike, walk or bicycle ride a different aspect. Winter diversions include skiing (cross-country and downhill), ice fishing, ice climbing and dogsledding in the north or long-distance ice skating on the frozen Göta Kanal in the south.

Then there is wildlife watching throughout the year; just look in any Swedish tourist information brochure or website for the word "safari." The tourist industry has fallen in love with the word. Safaris can be anything from one hour to a full-week affair. There are plenty of opportunities to join a beaver safari, a bear safari, a moose safari, a snowmobile safari or a rowboat safari.

To enjoy the Swedish outdoors, in summer remember to bring sunscreen, binoculars, and waterproof, windproof outerwear. All-weather clothing should be made of breathable fabric. Temperatures can be warm or cold, and chances are you will get caught in a sudden downpour. Most importantly, bring plenty of mosquito repellent as it will be your only weapon against airborne attacks by the Swedish mosquitoes. In winter, bring plenty of warm clothing as it can get very cold. The layering kind in acrylic or wool is recommended, while cotton should be avoided. A flashlight is always useful in winter as it tends to be dark, but a good thing about winter travel is that you can leave the mosquito repellent at home.

> **Tip:** Don't worry if your outdoor skills aren't up to par; with all the space there is rarely anyone around to see you embarrass yourself.

To appreciate the outdoors "the Swedish Way" there are plenty of high-quality campsites, many of them adjacent to cottage villages. There are also lots of youth hostels, now mostly referred to simply as hostels, since they're not just for youths anymore. All of them have their own distinctive style. And for those of us who like to rough it during daytime, but enjoy a comfortable hotel room and a nice dinner at night, there are plenty of high-standard hotels around.

- **STF**, the Svenska Turistföreningen (Swedish Tourist Association) was established in 1885. Today it has 330,000 members and operates 315 youth hostels, eight mountain stations and 40 mountain cabins.
- **SVIF**, Svenska Vandrarhem i Förening (Swedish Hostel Association) was founded in 1991. It counts 177 independent youth hostels as members.

USEFUL WEBSITES

- STF hostels . . . . . www.stfturist.se
- SVIF hostels . . . . . www.svif.se
- Camping . . . . . www.camping.se
- Canoeing & kayaking . . . . . www.kanotguiden.com
- Golf . . . . . www.sgf.golf.se
- Fishing . . . . . www.cinclusc.com

■ National Parks

As of this writing, Sweden has 28 national parks, nine of which were founded in 1909. They became the first national parks in Europe and came to be not long after Yellowstone in Wyoming

was established as the world's first national park in 1871. Like almost all national parks around the world, the Swedish parks are reserves owned by the government and protected from most human development. The basic idea behind establishing national parks is to preserve valuable natural and cultural environments for future generations. Today, most national parks have a dual role as refuge for both wildlife and for tourists. Once in a while, in Sweden as everywhere else, this leads to conflicts between environmentalists and the general public.

In addition to the national parks, Sweden also has a large number of nature reserves, today counting over 2,000, as well as many animal protection areas. In total, about 8% of the Swedish territory is protected in some way. Since 1976, Naturvårdsverket, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, has been responsible for all of these.

The 28 Swedish national parks, many unknown to foreign tourists, offer a spectacular diversity of terrain, from mountains to virgin and deciduous forest, swampland, archipelago and even old agricultural landscapes. This diversity, combined with spectacular scenery, will make anyone forget that the outside world really exists. Below is a small sampling from south to north.

Stenshuvud National Park (Hakan Sandbring, Imagebank, Sweden)

In the south there is **Stenshuvud**, one of the newer national parks, established in 1986. It is situated on a pretty coastal stretch on the east coast of Skåne with a mountain and leafy green beech forest that are carpeted with yellow anemones in the springtime. In summer, the ocean-side meadows are sprinkled with red orchids. Easy self-guided nature trails lead through the park to the Stenshuvud Mountain.

For those who like isolated islands, whether seeking activity or serenity, a bit farther north in the middle of the Baltic lies a lonely island, **Gotska Sandön.** It is a unique and romantic place, a fairytale island with sand dunes, deserted sandy beaches, windswept pine forests, and visiting migratory birds. The entire island is a national park established in 1909.

Moving up to the geographic middle of Sweden's inland, in the province of Härjedalen you will find **Sånfjället National Park**, where the towering peak of the **Sånfjället** mountaintop rises 800 m (2,624 feet) above the eerie landscape. This accessible wilderness area was also established as a

national park in 1909, but was significantly enlarged in 1989 and is home to bears, moose and lynx that wander the rather barren landscape.

On the northern coast, in the Gulf of Bothnia and close to Finland, an entire archipelago, **Haparanda Skärgård**, was set aside as a national park in 1995. Small islands with sandy beaches, interesting flora and lively bird life (over 200 species have been sighted here) make this ever-increasing park where new land is slowly rising out of the sea an intriguing place.

The northernmost national park in Sweden is **Vadvetjåkka**, suitable only for experienced wildlife adventurers. The park, established in 1920, is often cloudy and rainy and is in one of Sweden's most deserted areas. The mountains are mostly bare, but with some very interesting flora and an intense bird life in the river delta. There are also a couple of interesting and very large limestone caves in the park. Vadvetjåkka offers more than an adventure – it is a personal survival challenge.

Some of the parks mentioned above and many additional parks, each unique, are included in the regional chapters below.

The Regions of Sweden

The first difficulty when planning a trip to Sweden is to map out a route in this long country. After all, the distance between Malmö in the south and Kiruna in the north is equal to the distance between Malmö, Sweden and Rome, Italy.

Sweden is traditionally divided into three major areas: Norrland (north Sweden), Götaland (south Sweden) and Sveland the area in-between. The country is also divided into 25 landskap (provinces), plus Stockholm, and 21 län (counties), including Stockholm. The three major areas are not of equal size, the provinces and the counties sometimes share borders, sometimes not, and a county can also have a part of a province added to it. When it comes to these matters, even in this usually very orderly country, the bureaucrats have been able to utterly confuse inhabitants and visitors alike.

In this book we have divided Sweden into the six parts: **Stockholm and the Archipelago**, **North Sweden**, **Central Sweden**, **East Sweden**, **West Sweden** and **South Sweden**.

The second challenge for visitors is to choose which area(s) to include and which to omit, since each part of the country offers a multitude of different experiences and adventures. But for first-time and repeat visitors alike, a great starting point is the stylish capital, Stockholm.

Stockholm
N
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500 METERS
NORRMALM
ÖSTERMALM
KUNGSHOLMEN
DJURGÅRDEN
RIDDAR-HOLMEN
GAMLA STAN
SKEPPSHOLMEN
KASTELL-HOLMEN
BECK-HOLMEN
SÖDERMALM
Karlbergsvägen
Odengatan
Dalagatan
Torsgatan
Bamhusbro
Sveavägen
Birgerlarisgatan
Linnégatan
Valhallavägen
Karlavägen
Oxenstiernsgatan
Styrmansgatan
Narvavägen
Klarastrandsleden
Sankt Eriksgatan
Fleminggatan
Scheelegatan
Olof Palmesgatan
Kungsgatan
Kungsbron
Mäster Samuelsgatan
Norrlandsgatan
Strandvägen
Ladugårdslandsviken
Klarabergviadukten
Strömgatan
Skeppsholmsbron
Stadshus
Centralbron
Vasabron
Stottskajan
Djurgårdsvägen
Riddarfjärden
Strömmen
Söder Mälarstrand
Stadsgardsleden
Katarinavägen
Londonviadukten
Saltsjön
Hornsgatan
Folkungagatan
1. Kastellet
2. Arkitekturmuséet; Modernamuséet; Östasiatiskmuséet; Skeppsholmen Kyrkan; Svenskfarm
3. Nordiskamuséet; Vasamuséet; Galärkyrkogården; Biologiskamuséet; Aquariavattenmuseum; Spårvagnshall; Djurgårdskyrkan; Gröna Lunds Tivoli; Tobaksmuséet
4. Engelska Kyrkan
5. Nobelparken
6. Oskarskyrka
7. Historiskamuséet
8. Marie Bebådelsekyrkan
9. Maximteatern
10. To Ekoparken Nationalstadspark; Statens Sjöhistoriskamuseum; Telemuseum; Tekniskamuséet; Teknorama; Folkensmuseum Etnografiska
11. Gamla Stan
12. Riddarholmen
13. Stockholmstadsmuséet
14. Folkoperan
15. Riksdagshuset
16. Central Stockholm
17. Stadshuset
18. Kungsholmskyrka
19. Polishistoriskamuséet
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Stockholm & the Archipelago

There are cities we visit for their stunning beauty, others for their cultural offerings, and still others for their cuisine and fashionable bars. And then there is Stockholm, a striking, vibrant city with historic charm situated where lake Mälaren begins to mix with the Baltic Sea. Its waters are so clean that you can go swimming or fishing anywhere, even in the heart of city. This beautiful city is spread out over 14 islands that are tied together with a filigree of deep blue waterways, artsy tunnels, pedestrian-friendly bridges and emerald-green park land.

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There is a fascinating mix of architectural styles, ranging from medieval, to Renaissance and fin de siècle pomp – in shades of yellow and burnt ochre, with soft greens and every hue of brown – and finally to an almost brutal modernism. In this 750-year-old city, high-rise buildings made of glass and concrete share the skyline with historic ornate towers, turrets, church spires and patina rooftops, all in a workable blend.

Today's multi-ethnic Stockholm boasts 70 museums, 100 art galleries, over 100 slott (castles, palaces and manor houses). There are some 1,500 restaurants, many of which are run by award-winning chefs and, for a city with a relatively short summer season, an amazing number of establishments with outdoor seating. If this is not enough to entice visitors, there is an added attraction: the unique and amazingly beautiful archipelago, consisting of 24,000 islands and islets (called skerrets) only 25 minutes from the city center.

Ideally, Stockholm should be experienced both in the dark but festive month of December and in the shimmering brightness of June and July. However, since most visitors do not visit in winter, we will concentrate on the lighter part of the year when the days are usually warm and very long.

Getting Here

By Air: Most international and domestic flights into Stockholm land at **Arlanda International Airport**, 45 km (37 miles) north of Stockholm. The fastest way to get from there to the city center is to take the **Arlanda Express** high-speed train, which departs from a sta-

tion below the airport building. There are also the less expensive **Flygbussarna** (airport coaches). And there is the most comfortable, but most costly, alternative – a taxi.

The other airports servicing Stockholm are **Bromma** and **Skavsta**, both used mainly by domestic and a few low-cost European airlines.

GETTING FROM THE AIRPORT INTO TOWN			
		Travel time	**Fare**
By train	Arlanda Express	20 minutes	SEK160
By bus	Flygbussarna Arlanda	40 minutes	SEK 80
	Flygbussarna Bromma	20 minutes	SEK 60
	Flygbussarna Skavsta	80 minutes	SEK 100

By Taxi: Taxi Stockholm offers a flat rate from the airport SEK 350. From the city all rides are metered and cost about SEK 450-550. Travel time is 40 minutes, depending on the traffic situation.

By Train: All trains from other Swedish cities arrive at Centralen (the central railway station), which is also the hub for most of the public transportation within the city and surrounding areas.

By Bus: Airport buses and buses from other Swedish cities all use **City Terminalen**, a bus station that is connected to Centralen.

By Boat: From Finland you will arrive at the terminals of the respective companies, **Silja Line** at Siljaterminalen, and **Viking Line** at Vikingterminalen. From Estonia on **Estline** you will arrive at Frihamnen. All of the terminals have connections with public transportation and with taxis into the center of Stockholm.

By Car: From any location in Sweden, try to avoid rush-hour traffic and be prepared for difficulties when finding parking. Some Stockholm hotels have their own parking or agreements with a nearby garage.

Getting Around

The best way to get a good overview of the city is to start the visit with a city sightseeing tour by bus or boat, or, preferably, a combination of both. Many Stockholmers insist that their city is best seen from the water. At first glance, Stockholm might look a bit confusing due to the many islands and bridges, but visitors soon get their bearings and discover how easy it really is to get around by foot. There is also a very well-functioning public transportation system consisting of

T-banan (the subway), regional trains, buses and even a boat shuttle service.

Most of the public transportation is operated by SL (Stockholms Lokaltrafik). The **SL Center**, their main information office, is located at Sergels Torg. You can buy one-way tickets with prices starting from about SEK 22, depending where you are heading, but if you are staying for a few days, you are better off buying a discount card such as **Turistkortet – the Tourist Card**. This is valid for unlimited transportation during 24 hours for SEK 80 or 72 hours for SEK150, both becoming valid from the time of purchase. There are reduced rates for children and seniors. If you are planning to really get to know Stockholm, your best deal will be **Stockholmskortet-the Stockholm Card**. It provides discounts to 70 of the city's attractions, unlimited travel on public transportation, free parking within the city, and an excellent guidebook with city maps and multilingual information. In addition there are various seasonal special offers.

THE STOCKHOLM CARD		
	Cost	**Valid for**
Adults	SEK 260	24 hours
Adults	SEK 390	48 hours
Adults	SEK 540	72 hours
Children 7-17	SEK 100	24 hours
Children 7-17	SEK 140	48 hours
Children 7-17	SEK 190	72 hours

The Stockholm Card can be purchased at the Tourist Center (see below), at the SL Center or any other official tourist information office in Stockholm.

For any questions about getting around in Stockholm, such as what to see or what to do, you can pick up information material or buy excursion tickets and maps at the main tourist office in Stockholm, the **Tourist Center**, Sweden House, Hamngatan 27, Kungsträdgården, ☎ 08-789-2490, fax 08-789-2491, info@stoinfo.se, www.stockholmtown.com. Open weekdays, June-Aug, 9 am-7 pm; May and Sept, 9 am-6 pm; Oct-April, 9 am-6 pm; shorter hours on weekends.

A fun and convenient way to get around town is with **Stockholm Boatshuttle Service**, which consiots of small boats shuttling between some of the attractions on the various Stockholm islands. They follow a route and a time schedule. Tickets are sold on board and you can purchase tickets that allow between one and seven stops or an unlimited-stop one-day ticket. Prices range from SEK 40 to SEK 100.

Shuttleboats leave from Strandvägen, Kajplats 18, ☎ 08-783-0610, www.rederimalaren.se.

For guided sightseeing tours done mainly on land, **City Sightseeing** organizes very informative tours either by bus, bus and boat, horse and carriage, on foot, or on bike. Most tours leave from Gustav Adolfs Torg, ☎ 08-587-14030, www.citysightseeing.com. For guided sightseeing tours on water, **Stockholm Sightseeing** offers some very unusual tours in various seafaring vessels. They range from a mini-archipelago tour on a classic ship dating from 1912 to an action-packed, high-speed trip on a futuristic-looking speedboat.Tours leave from Strömkajen and Stadshuskajen, ☎ 08-587-14020, www.stockholmsightseeing.com. There are also a multitude of lunch, brunch and dinner cruises, concert tours and much more. For detailed up-to-date information, contact the Tourist Center. See *On Wheels, In the Air* and *On Water* below for additional getting-around information.

For those who do not want to hike the city by foot the best alternative is to use the well-functioning public transportation system. Renting a bike, a car or roller blades are other options.

■ Bicycle Rental

Cykel & Mopeduthyrningen, Strandvägen, Kajplats 24, ☎ 08-660-7959.

Djurgårdsbrunns Sjöcafé, Galärvarvsvägen 2, ☎ 08-660-5757.

Servicedepån, Kungsholmsgatan 32, ☎ 08-651-0066.

■ Car Rental

The rates are generally lower when booked in the US or via the Internet. Most rental cars have manual transmissions, but there are some with automatic transmission available.

Avis, ☎ 020-788-200 (toll-free within Sweden).

Hertz, ☎ 020-211-2 11 (toll-free within Sweden).

■ Inline Skating

Djurgårdsbrunns Sjöcafé, Galärvarvsvägen 2, ☎ 08-660-5757.

■ Taxis

Taxis are rather expensive; even the shortest trip in the city will set you back SEK 100, plus a 10% gratuity is expected.

Taxi Stockholm, ☎ 08-150-000.

Taxi Kurir, ☎ 08-300-000.

■ Hot-Air Ballooning

Color is the most striking thing about the Swedish capital, which is best seen from the air, and Stockholm happens to be one of the few big cities in the world that permits hot-air-balloons to fly over the center of the city and even to land near the heart of the city – weather permitting. Ballooning season runs from May 1 to Sept 30.

City Ballong AB, Gästrikegatan 8 11362 Stockholm, ☎ 08-345-464, fax 08-327-367, www.cityballong.se. Cost is SEK 1,795, including a champagne picnic and a diploma.

Exploring Stockholm On Foot

> **Tip:** Opening hours and admission prices are subject to change. Contact the Tourist Center or the places you plan to visit to get the latest update. The admission prices listed below are per adult, and children's prices are about 50% lower as a rule.

■ Norrmalm/City

Stockholm is great for walking, with plenty of parks (a third of the city consists of parkland) and cozy cafés to relax. Tourists in Stockholm usually start their visit with attractions like **Gamla Stan** (Old Town), **Skansen** and the **Vasa Museum**. But as the heart of the city for the locals is Norrmalm, which they refer to as "**City**," let's start with a stroll in this part of town. This is where you find the main tourist information center, the major department stores, shopping galleries, office buildings and many cafés, fast-food outlets, restaurants and the hottest nightlife. This is also where you'll find **Centralen** (the central railway station), which is the hub of almost all land transportation and a good starting point for many Stockholm discoveries. It is conveniently located, clean and orderly and is tied together with T-centralen (the main subway station), Arlanda Express (the train to Arlanda International Airport), City Terminalen (the main bus station) and Hotellcentralen (a great place to make hotel reservations). At Centralen you will also find foreign newspapers and a post office.

From Centralen, head toward **Sergels Torg** square via Kungsgatan street or via Klarabergsgatan street. Kungsgatan will take you to **PUB**, the department store where Greta Garbo worked before becoming an actress, and to **Hötorget** square (the Hay Market), where hay was actually sold into the middle of the 19th century; it has a history that goes back to the Middle Ages. Fruit, vegetables and fresh-cut flowers are now being sold here. Pay a visit (take the escalator down) to **Hötorgshallen** – a

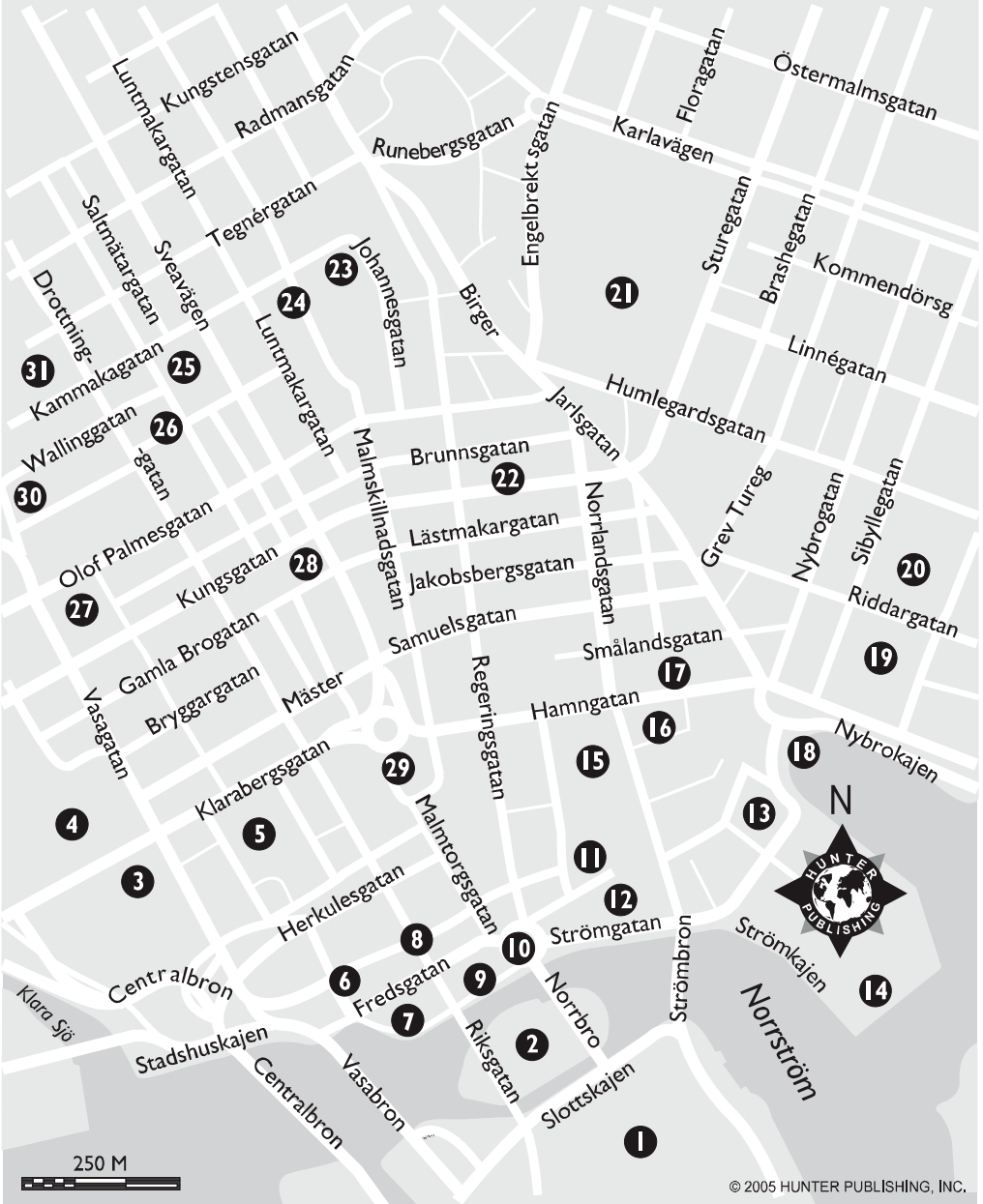
multi-ethnic food market where you can find the most interesting specialties from all over the world. Facing Hötorget is the impressive entrance of the bright blue stuccoed **Stockholm Concert Hall**, built in the 1920s to resemble a Greek temple. It is the permanent home of the Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, but is probably best known as the site for the annual Nobel Prize ceremony. From there a usually busy pedestrian street lined with various shops will take you to **Sergels Torg**. If you choose Klarabergsgatan street, it will take you in a straight line from Centralen's main entrance to Sergels Torg. On the way there you will pass by **Åhlens**, Stockholm's largest department store, with a huge and excellent supermarket in the basement.

Sergels Torg, for some odd reason, was named after Johan Tobias Sergel (1740-1814) who was one of Sweden's famous sculptors. He is best known for his works in French Rococo and Neo-Classic styles. His *Centaur Embracing a Nymph*, in the Louvre, is shown at left. It is an unlikely match to this very busy 1960s-style intersection, with a sunken pedestrian square called Plattan and a roundabout with a glass obelisk at street level. Facing Sergels Torg is **Kulturhuset** (the Cultural Center) from 1974, a structure that Stockholmers either love or hate. Kulturhuset is a center for all art forms featuring various exhibits and happenings in photography, art, design, theater, fashion and multimedia. (Sergels Torg 3, ☎ 08-508-31508, T-bana to T-Centralen, open all year, Tues-Fri, 10 am-7 pm and Sat-Sun 11 am-5 pm; free admission and SEK 20-40 for special exhibits.)

This is also where you find **Serieteket**, the only library in Sweden that specializes in comic books.

From Sergels Torg, continue on to Hamngatan Street and it will take you to **Kungsträdgården** (the king's garden), one of the smallest but most popular parks in Stockholm. On the corner of Hamngatan and Kungsträdgården stands Sverigehuset (the Sweden House), the home of Stockholm's main **Tourist Center**. It provides a wealth of informational material and a very friendly and knowledgeable staff. On the opposite end of this park facing Karl XII's Torg Square is Kungliga Svenska Operan (the Royal Swedish Opera). Among Swedes it is referred to just as **Operan**, right, a beautiful Neo-Classical building that officially opened in 1898. It was erected on the same site as Stockholm's first opera house, built in 1782. The

Central Stockholm



1. Gamla Stan
2. Riksdaghuset
3. Stockholm Central Station
4. City Terminal
5. Klara Kyrka
6. Konstakademien
7. Rosenbad
8. Medelhavsmuseum
9. UD (Foreign Ministry)
10. Gusatv Adolfs Torg
11. Jakobskyrka
12. Operan; Karl XIIs Torg
13. Musikakademien, Dramaten
14. Nationalmuséum
15. Kungsträdgården
16. China Theater
17. Hallwylskamuséet
18. Raoul Wallenbergs Torg
19. Kungliga Hovstallet
20. Armémuséum
21. Humlegården, Kungligabiblioteket
22. Marionettmuséet
23. Johanneskyrka
24. Franska Skolar
25. Adolf Fredriks Kyrka
26. Citykyrkan
27. Adventskyrkan
28. Konserthuset
29. Kulturhuset
30. Folketshus
31. Strindbergsmuséet
32. Immanuelskyrkan

first time the art of opera appeared in Sweden was at the beginning of the 18th century when visiting opera companies from foreign lands started to arrive. This changed when the flamboyant King Gustav III, a great patron of art and literature founded a Swedish opera company in 1771 and also started to plan the first opera building. Barely 10 years after his opera house opened, King Gustav III's life ended in a dramatic scene worthy of an opera – he was assassinated at a masked ball. In the present opera house is the city's much-loved Belle Epoque bar, the Café Opera, which on a beautiful day is a perfect setting for an al fresco lunch and some people-watching.

Just across Hamngatan from the Sweden House, stands an imposing building with the letters **NK** (short for Nordiska Kompaniet) encircled in gold. Since its opening in 1915 NK has been the most upscale department store in Stockholm. For additional upscale shopping, just walk a couple of blocks to Biblioteksgatan street, which is lined with an array of famous trademark boutiques. A bit farther down on Hamngatan, almost where it ends, is the very attractive **Berzelii Park**, which was created on a landfill in the early 1850s. The beautiful buildings facing the park are commonly known as the "**Berns**." One of them is **Berns Salonger**, built in 1863. Another is **China** (the Chinese Theater), from 1929. This is one of the world's finest examples of a theater interior in Chinese style, fully comparable with the better-known Grauman's Chinese Theater in Hollywood that was built in 1927.

These were the brainchild of a confectioner, H.R. Berns, who started off with an entertainment hall and café-restaurant, which he called Berns Salonger. This opening changed then-sleepy little Stockholm's entertainment world forever. During the first years, the entertainment was a mix of symphony orchestras, can-can dancers and knife throwers, but over the years an array of famous international stars have performed at Berns. They include Josephine Baker, Edith Piaf, Harry Belafonte, Aretha Franklin and Michael Bolton, to name a few. In 1999 Berns Salonger (bars and restaurants) was re-opened after a great renovation in close cooperation with British designer Sir Terence Conran. The same year, Berns Hotel, connected to Berns Salonger, opened its door. This is a small gem with 65 rooms.

More Norrmalm/City Sights

Located close to Centralen are a few more not-to-be-missed Norrmalm/ City attractions. One is **Casino Cosmopol**, an international standard casino – one of four in Sweden; even if you are not a gambler it is worth visiting just to see the interior. Built as a very elegant movie theater in 1918, called the Palladium, for

decades it was where most movies had their opening night. The renovation for the new casino has been very nicely done and with the help of old photos and drawings a lot of the original splendor has been re-created. (Kungsgatan 65, ☎ 08-781-8800, open all year daily, 1 pm-3 am; admission SEK 30. Minimum age 20. Bring passport.)

The other place not to miss is the **Icebar**, a great success on the Stockholm bar scene. It is a part of the chic designer hotels Nordic Light and Nordic Sea, and has been created in cooperation with the amazing Ice Hotel in Jukkasjärvi (see *North Sweden/Lappland*). To be in the Icebar is like being a part of an ice carving, since everything is made out of ice; the walls, the bar counter, the bar tables and even the cocktail glasses, filled with a mix of Absolut vodka and colorful juice, are made out of ice.

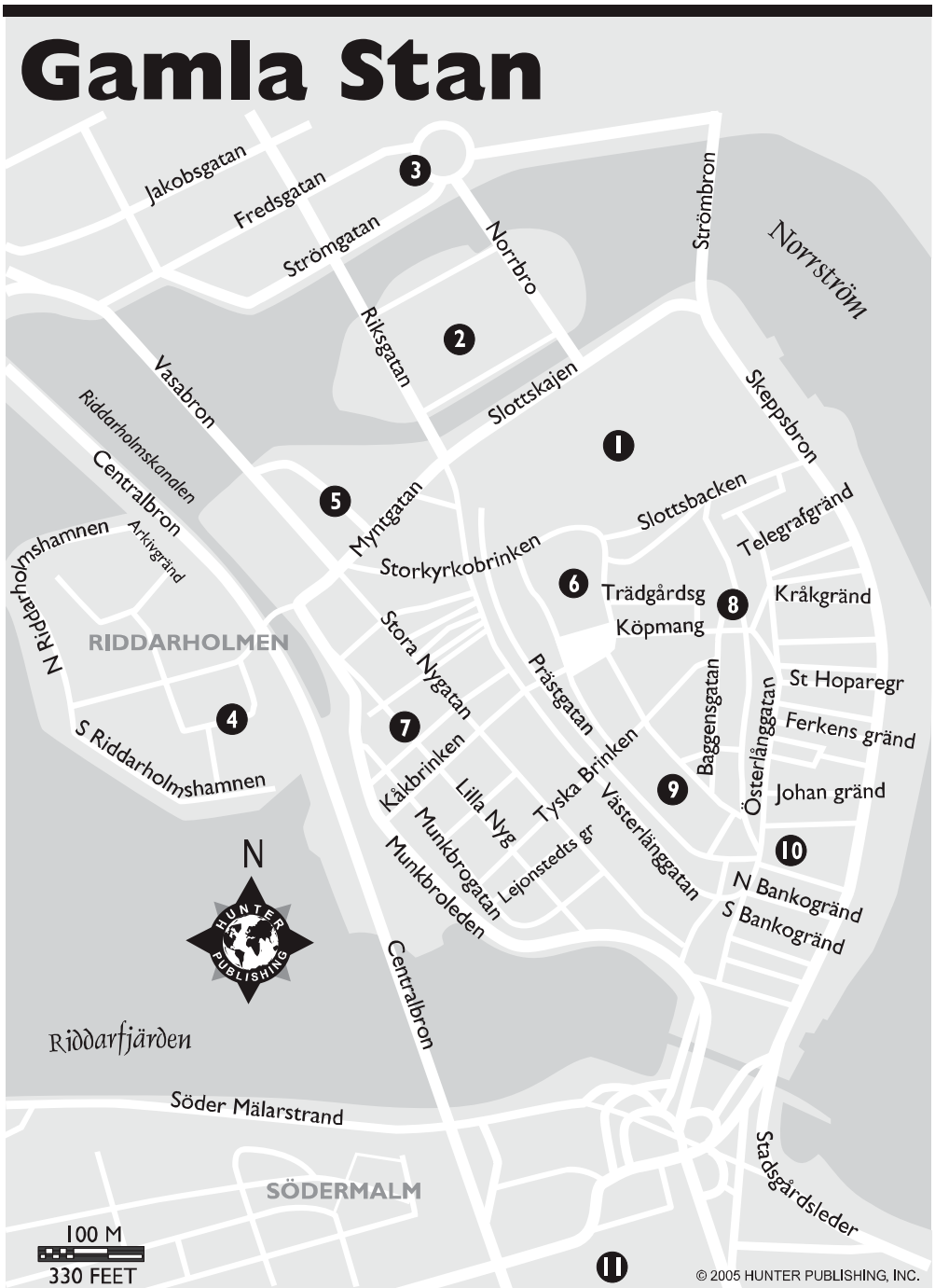
■ Gamla Stan (Old Town)

Approaching Gamla Stan

Gamla Stan, the heart of Stockholm's history, is actually made up of three islands, the main one being **Stadsholmen**, plus neighboring **Helgeandsholmen** and **Riddarholmen**. The small size of Gamla Stan with its cluster of handsome old buildings and narrow cobbled streets, stairs and alleys makes it a perfect place for aimless wanderings and is a true joy to explore.

If you do follow Drottningatan (a pedestrian street) from City to Gamla Stan you will first come to **Helgeandsholmen** (the island of the Holy Sprit) and **Riksdagshuset** (the House of Parliament), which was completed in 1904. The sculptures above the entrance serve as a reminder of the old Riksdag of four estates (peasants, burghers, nobility and clergy) that was founded in the 16th century. (Riksgatan 3A, ☎ 08-786-4000, T-banan to Gamla Stan, guided tours in English July-Aug weekdays, 12:30 and 2 pm, Sept-June weekends, 1:30 pm; free admission.)

Sveriges Riksbank (the Central Bank of Sweden), was also located here until 1976, when the bank moved and the government grew. This bank was founded in 1656 and is the world's longest-established bank. During



1. Trekronor
2. Riksdagshuset; Medeltidsmuséet
3. To Stockholm City Center
4. Riddarholmskyrkan, Kommerskollegium
5. Riddarhuset, Högsta Domstolen
6. Storkyrkan; Stortorget
7. Postmuséet
8. Finskakyrkan
9. Tyskakyrkan, Storkyrkoskolan
10. Storkyrkobadet
11. Stockholms Stadmuseum, Ryssgården, Sodermalmstorg

the remodeling process from1978-1983, it was decided to build a new underground garage for the members of parliament. Preceding the planned garage construction, an archaeological investigation took place and at that time parts of a fortified city wall built in the 1530s (during reign of King Gustav Vasa) was discovered. So, instead of parking for the politicians, **Medeltidsmuseet** (the Medieval Museum) was built around the ancient findings. (Strömparterren, ☎ 08-508-31 90, Bus 43 or 62 or T-banan to Gamla Stan, open all year July-Aug daily, 11 am-4 pm, and Sept-June, Tues-Sun, 11 am-4 pm; admission SEK 40.)

On **Riddarholmen** (the island of Nobles) stands a statue of Birger Jarl, the founder of Stockholm. The name Stockholm was mentioned for the first time in 1252 in a letter from Birger Jarl to his son. On the square named after the city father, Birger Jarls Torg, you will also see **Riddarholmskyrkan** church, built between 1280 and 1310. It is the oldest church in Stockholm and the final resting place for most of the Swedish royals (royalty was buried here from 1300 to 1950). Svea Hovrätt (the Swedish High Court) is housed in three of the beautiful palaces surrounding the square, all of them dating back to the17th century. (Riddarholmen, ☎ 08-402-6130, T-banan to Gamla Stan, open daily, May 15-Aug 31, 10 am-4 pm; admission SEK 20.)

Moored off Riddarholmen lies the stunning and much-photographed **Mälardrottningen** yacht. In 1930 she was given to millionairesse Barbara Hutton as an 18th-birthday present. Today "the Queen of Lake Mälaren" is a 59-room floating hotel, permanently anchored here. Straight across from Riddarholmen is the **Stadsholmen** (the town island) and the unique Dutch Baroque-style palace **Riddarhuset** (the house of nobility). It was the political headquarters of Sweden's aristocracy during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Inside in the Great Hall you can see an impressive display of 2,350 coats of arms. Riddarhuset is still owned today by the Swedish nobility. (Riddarhustorget 10, ☎ 08-723-3990, Bus 3 or 53 or T-banan to Gamla Stan, open all year, Mon-Fri, 11:30 am-12:30 pm; admission SEK 20.)

Stortorget is the historic main square of Gamla Stan, with its most prominent building **Börshuset**. This is the old Stock Exchange, where trading went on from 1778 until 1990. It now houses the **Nobel Museum**, where you can see short films about the prizes, listen to acceptance speeches and see all kinds of displays relating to the Nobel prizes. (Börshuset-Stortorget, ☎ 08-232-506, Bus 46, 55, 59 or 76 or T-banan to Gamla Stan, open all year, mid-May to mid-Sept, 10 am-6 pm, rest of the year, 11 am-5 pm, closed Mon; admission SEK 40.) Stortorget is a quiet place with some picturesque 15th- and 16th-century buildings, restaurants and cafés. In these peaceful surroundings it is difficult to imagine the horror of Stockholms Blodbad that took place on this square back in

1520, when the Danish king Christian II beheaded 82 Swedish noblemen.

Västerlånggatan street cuts straight through the central part of Gamla Stan and follows what used to be the first defense wall. Today it is the main shopping street in this part of town. Unfortunately, more and more souvenir shops seem to be appearing, not all of them tasteful. However there are some great restaurants and cafés worth visiting along this street. Västerlånggatan ends at Järntorgert (the iron square) and from here you can turn in on **Österlånggatan**, a street that ends up at Kungliga Slottet (the Royal Palace). This street offers some quaint antique shops, galleries, art studios, and a few charming restaurants, such as **Den Gyldene Freden**. It is the oldest restaurant in Stockholm, located here since 1722 and in business ever since! This street takes you to **Slottsbacken** (the castle hill) and to the Royal Palace, **Kungliga Slottet**, a massive testament to Italian Baroque architecture. It was built from 1697-1754, after a fire destroyed the old palace. Its history starts at the same time as Stockholm's history, when the city founder Birger Jarl built a "fortress" on this spot. Kungliga Slottet is built on part of the remains of the old fortress known as Tre Kronor (three crowns). With 608 rooms today, Kungliga Slottet is the largest working Royal Palace in Europe. It is the official residence of H.M. the King, although the royal family actually resides in a fairy-tale setting at Drottningholm Palace. (Gamla Stan, ☎ 08-402-6130, Bus 46, 55, 59, 76 or T-banan to Gamla Stan.)

The Royal Palace

In Kungliga Slottet you can visit **Representationsvåningarna** (the State Apartments, June-Aug 31 daily 10 am-4 pm and Sept-May Tues-Sun noon-3 pm, SEK 70), with their opulent Baroque and Rococo interiors, and **Skattkammaren** (the Treasury, May 15-Aug 31, daily, 10 am-4 pm, Sept-May, Tues-Sun, noon-3 pm, SEK 70), a dungeon-like vault containing all kinds of glittery regalia, the Swedish Crown Jewels. Deep underground is **Livrustkammaren** (the Armory, June-Aug 31 daily 10 am-5 pm and Sept-May Tues-Sun noon-4 pm, SEK 65), which was founded by King Gustav II Adolf in 1628 and said to be the country's oldest museum. **Tre Kronor Museet** (Three Crowns Museum, May 15-Aug 31 daily 10 am-4 pm and Sept-May Tues-Sun noon-3pm, SEK 70) contains part of of the old castle ruins. All of the above are open to visitors year-round and offer an excellent insight to the past.

Do not miss the **Changing of the Guard**, which takes place during the summer months, weekdays at 12:15 pm, Sundays and holidays at 1:15 pm. Young Swedish men in operetta-like uniforms (they even sport white spats) are doing the guarding as part of their compulsory military service.

Facing Slottsbacken is the **Tessin Palace**, considered by many to be the most beautiful building in northern Europe. It was built by architect Nicodemus Tessin the younger for himself, as he was building the royal palace. Today the Tessin Palace is the residence of the county governor.

Storkyrkan

At the end of Slottsbacken, by the water's edge, stands a statue of the foremost Gustavian, King Gustav III. On top of the hill stands what today is known as **Storkyrkan**, the Cathedral of Stockholm. True to tradition, when Birger Jarl founded Stockholm, he also built a small church on the highest point of Stadsholmen island. This little church was first mentioned in a document from 1271. After a couple of fires, a new and bigger church was built on the same spot and was inaugurated in 1306. What started out as a small village church was rebuilt and added to over the years. Then, in the middle of the 18th century, city architect J.F. Carlberg changed the entire exterior to better fit in with the new Kungliga Slottet. Storkyrkan (the big church) has been the site of many royal weddings and christenings. Coronations also took place in this church for over 500 years, with King Oscar II being the last Swedish regent to be formally crowned in 1873. Do not miss the chance to take a close look at the marvelous wooden sculpture of Saint George and the Dragon, by Bernt Notke, unveiled in 1489. It is is made out of oak and elk antlers. A replica in bronze is placed on Köpmantorget square. (Gamla Stan, ☎ 08-723-3009, Bus 46, 55, 59, 76 or T-banan to Gamla Stan, May 12-Sep 27, daily, 9 am-6 pm, rest of the year, 9 am-4 pm; free admission.)

Behind Storkyrkan stands the Obelisk from 1797, raised as a thank you to the Stockholmers who had defended Stockholm when the King was away fighting Russia.

More Gamla Stan Sights

Set out to find **Mårten Trotzigs Gränd**; of all the narrow streets and alleys in Gamla Stan this tiny street of steps is said to be the narrowest. Continue on to the corner of Stortorget and Skomakargatan where, if you look up at the house, you will see **Kanonkulan** (the cannonball) embedded in the wall. How did it get there? No one knows for sure. One

Typical narrow street

version is that the Danish King Christian I fired it in 1471, while others say it was shot by a Swede who was aiming at King Christian II during the Stockholm Blodbad. But neither of these versions is very likely, as the house with the cannonball was not built until 1795. The builder of the house claimed, as is shown in some saved notes, that he simply placed it in the same location where he found it before the old house was torn down.

Another oddity is **Runstenen** (the Rune Stone), which dates back to the Vikings. At the corner of Kåkbrinken and Prästgatan streets, take a look at the lower part of the old house, where a happy housebuilder used a Viking rune stone as building material. The cannon leaning against it was probably put there to protect the wall from the careless horse and buggy drivers of the 17th century!

And finally there is the **Evert Taube statue** (1890-1976) on Järntorget, a lifelike figure of the beloved Swedish troubadour placed close to his favorite restaurant, Den Gyldene Freden.

■ Blasieholmen & Skeppsholmen

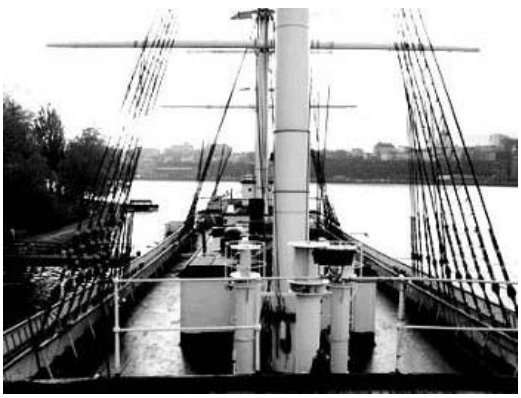
Leaving Gamla Stan via Strömsbron bridge will take you back to Norrmalm/City and to **Blasieholmen**, where the **Grand Hotel** is located. This Stockholm landmark was built in 1874 and is the city's most prestigious hotel, favored by Nobel laureates, business moguls, royalty and the Rolling Stones. If your budget does not permit a stay, try to save up enough kronor for the excellent smörgåsbord, which is served daily. Just make sure to arrive hungry! A bit farther on, follow the water past the Grand Hotel, and you will see the striking **National Museet** (National Museum of Fine Arts) building. It is right on the waterfront, like the Grand Hotel, with a great view of Kungliga Slottet. National Museet has an impressive collection of European art dating from medieval times to the 19th century, and the largest collection of porcelain in Scandinavia. (Blasieholmshamnen, ☎ 08-519-54300, Bus 46, 55, 59, 62, 65, 76 or T-banan to Kungsträedgården, open all year Tues 11 am-8 pm, Wed-Sun 11 am-5 pm; admission SEK 75.)

Cross over the bridge and you will find yourself on the pretty island of **Skeppsholmen**. On this former navy island the first **Moderna Museet** (the Museum of Modern Art) opened in the old navy drill house in 1958.

The bridge to Skeppsholmen

However, the collection of both Swedish and international modern art became too large; in 1989 an architectural contest for a new building design was launched and then won by acclaimed Spanish architect Rafael Moneo. Here, you can see Brancusi, Picasso, Dali – to name a few – and a great collection of American pop art. (Skeppsholmen, ☎ 08-519-55200, Tues-Wed, 10 am-9pm, and Thurs-Sun, 10 am-6 pm; free admission to collections, SEK 40-75 for special exhibits.)

At the neighboring **Arkitektur Museet** (the Museum of Architecture) you can walk through hundreds of years of Swedish housebuilding, ranging from the log cabins of olden days to the latest in loft living. Special exhibits and lectures are often taking place here. (Skeppsholmen, ☎ 08-587-27000, Bus 65, open all year, Tues-Wed, 10 am-9 pm, and Thurs-Sun, 10 am-6 pm; free admission.)



Just below the museum building, in a picture-perfect setting, is where the yearly Stockholm Jazz & Blues Festival takes place for five days each July. This is also the island where you will find one of the most spectacular and popular hostels in the world, the 19th-century clipper, ***Af Chapman***. Shown at right, she was built in England and, after many years of sailing as a cargo ship, was sold to the Swedish navy and become a training ship. In 1949, she was sold again and became a permanently anchored hostel.

■ Östermalm

Walking back toward National Museet, follow Museikajen and Nybrokajen along the water to Nybroplan square. Here you will see **Kungliga Dramatiska Teatern** (The Royal Dramatic Theater), founded by King Gustav III in 1788. He was a colorful monarch and 18th-century esthete who built operas and theaters, created furniture, designed clothes, wrote plays – and even acted in some of them. The

building that now houses **Dramaten**, as the Swedes prefer to call this theater, was built from 1901-1908. It is a striking white marble structure in Jugend style (also called Art Nouveau, drawing inspiration from animal and plant motifs) with a splendid interior, perfectly situated on Östermalm, which is one of the most fashionable addresses in Stockholm.

Follow Birger Jarlsgatan to **Stureplan Square**, where you will find **Sturebadet**, a marvelous Stockholm spa institution founded in 1885. In 1985 a fire destroyed much of it, but it was rebuilt and opened again in 1989. Today, it offers more than 50 spa services and is a perfect spot for a jet-lag-curing massage, but you must book well in advance. (Sturegallerian 36, ☎ 08-545-01500, T-banan to Östermalmstorg, open all year, Mon-Fri, 6:30 am-10 pm, and Sat-Sun, 9 am-7 pm; prices depend on treatment requested.)

Today, the oldest part of the original Sturebadet is a restaurant that is part of the Sturecompagniet entertainment complex and all of it is now part of the Sture Gallerian mall. Right in front stands Svampen (the mushroom), a large concrete structure that is a traditional Stockholm meeting spot. On the back of Sture Gallerian is Humlegårdsgatan street, where you will find **Östermalmstorg** Square and **Östermalms Saluhall**. Also called Östermalmshallen, it is an indoor marketplace dating back to 1888, with an almost Edwardian grandness. This is how all food should be presented and sold. A visit to this "high church of food markets" will surely work up your appetite. Here you will find opportunities to sample some great specialties from the sea at **Lisa Elmquist's**. This is one of Stockholm's best fish and seafood stores and has been here since 1926. Today it also has a small, very popular restaurant.

From Östermalms Saluhall you can turn back to Nybroplan and then take a leisurely stroll along the elegant Strandvägen avenue. Here you can enjoy the water views on one side and the impressive house façades on the other. Most of these houses were built at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. About 150 years ago Stockholm was a small provincial town where cattle still grazed and hay was sold on Hötorget. With the exception of the Royal Palace, a few churches and some homes of the aristocracy, the architecture was rather plain. Then came the Industrial Revolution and, because of Sweden's wealth of natural resources, the country was quickly changed into one of the world's most powerful nations. With private ownership and the profits from timber, iron and coal, the face of Stockholm changed when a fast building expansion started during the 1880s. The majority of the new houses were being built on Östermalm, which was turned into a brand new upscale bourgeois neighborhood, with Strandvägen considered the most desirable address. It has remained so until today, a fact that is easy to understand when strolling along this magnificent waterfront esplanade.

■ Djurgården

When crossing over the Djurgården bridge, built in 1897, take a look at the beautiful cast-iron railings and the sculpted Asa (Viking) gods. **Djurgården** means "Garden of Animals" and this was once the hunting grounds of Swedish monarchs. Today, this sparsely populated recreational island is part of the **National City Park**, also known as **Eko Parken**. It was founded in 1995 and is the only park of its kind in the world. It covers a total area of 27 square meters (10½ square miles), comprising about two-thirds land and one-third water. In this most unusual city park there are many rare species of plant and animal life, the densest population of giant oak trees in northern Europe and hundreds of protected architecturally unique buildings. On the Djurgården side of the bridge, the first big building that catches the eye houses the impressive **Nordiska Museet** (the Nordic Museum). Its founder was Artur Hazelius, who, like all other ethnographers of that time, worried that the rise of industry would obliterate folk traditions. So he started to collect all kinds of items depicting daily life. These items were displayed in a small museum he called Nordiska Museet, located on Drottningatan street. Mr. Hazelius was very good at convincing people that preserving history was important, and people donated everything, from writers' manuscripts to entire houses. Nordiska Museet was turned into a foundation owned by the Swedish people and, within a short time, the little building on Drottninggatan became too small. In 1907 the new Nordiska Museet on Djurgården was opened to the public. The building, which looks like a huge Nordic Renaissance castle, was actually intended to be four times as big! Also rather large is the King Gustav Vasa statue by Carl Milles, which greets visitors as they enter. (Djurgårdsvägen 6-16, ☎ 08-519-56000, Bus 44, 47 or 69, open all year, Tues, 11 am-8 pm, Wed-Sun, 11 am-5 pm; admission SEK 70.)

Nordiska Museet

Artur Hazelius was also the creator of **Skansen**, the first open-air museum in the world, established in 1891. From the beginning, Skansen and Nordiska Museet were one entity, but since 1963 they have been run independently. However, Nordiska Museet is still the rightful owner of many of the items displayed at Skansen. In this huge heritage park more than 150 historically or culturally important buildings can be seen close up. The buildings were moved here from all over Sweden, spanning a period from 1500 to the 1920s. They show how people have lived and

worked in all regions of the country, ranging from Sami camps from up north to manors in the south. At the Skansen Zoo you will also get an opportunity to see Swedish wildlife up close, such as elk, reindeer, and wolves, as well as some exotic imports. All this and more are set in 75 acres of rolling countryside and winding roads. This is also the site for many special events: summer concerts, midsummer celebrations and an outstanding Christmas market throughout the month of December. Skansen is a most interesting place for adults and children alike. (Djurgården, ☎ 08-442-8000, Bus 44 or 47 or vintage tram from Norrmalmstorg or ferry from Slussen, open every day except Christmas Eve. June-Aug 10 am-10 pm (historic buildings 11 am-3 pm), Sept-May 10 am-4 pm; admission depends on day of the week and season, SEK 30-70.)

Other family-friendly attractions on Djurgården are **Junibacken**, a house full of fairytales and the magical world of Astrid Lindgren (☎ 08-587-23000, open all year, June-Aug, daily, 9 am-6 pm, and Sept-May, Tue-Fri, 10 am-6 pm; Sat-Sun, 9 am-6 pm; admission SEK 95, children 75) and **Gröna Lund** amusement park, which is 120 years old, but has the most up-to-date scary rides found anywhere. (☎ 08-670-7600, open daily, May-beginning Sept, 11 am-11 pm; admission SEK 60.) Both can be reached via Bus 44 or 47, by vintage tram from Norrmalmstorg or by ferry from Slussen.

For art and nature lovers there is **Waldemarsudde**, the home of the Swedish painter Prince Eugen, son of King Oscar II. Prince Eugen lived and worked here from 1905 until his death in 1947. This house is furnished with Swedish Rococo furniture and also has lovely English gardens and an art gallery. The fresh-cut flower arrangements in the house were stipulated by his will. (Prins Eugens Vag 6, ☎ 08-545-83700, Bus 47, open all year, Tues-Sun, 11 am-5 pm; admission SEK 75.)

On the far end of Djurgården is a true gem, the **Thiel Gallery**. It was built from 1904 to 1907 by Ernest Thiel as a home and an art gallery. Ernst Thiel made a fortune as a banker, but did not start to seriously collect art until 1896, when he married for the second time. Through his new wife he became a good friend of many great artists. Set on a hill overlooking the water, the Thiel Gallery carries some amazing works of, among others, Carl Larsson, Bruno Liljefors, Manet and Toulouse-Lautrec, as well as 12 important paintings by Edward Munch. There are also works by August Strindberg, Sweden's beloved writer who, unknown to many, also was an accomplished painter. By 1920 Ernst Theil was bankrupt and, in 1924, the Swedish state became the new owner of the property and the collections. (Thielska Galleriet, Sjötullsbacken 6, ☎ 08-662-5858, Bus 69, open all year, Mon-Sat, noon-4 pm, and Sun, 1-4 pm; admission SEK 50.)

For most visitors one of the memorable Stockholm attractions is the one-of-a-kind **Vasamuseet**, which is set in a unique modern museum building. It was specially built to house the glorious, but ill-fated, royal

warship *Vasa*. This ship sank in 1628 on its maiden voyage, even before it left the harbor, and claimed some 50 of the 150 crewmen onboard. Preserved in mud on the cold harbor floor for 333 years, it was spectacularly raised in 1961. Today, it is a reminder of one of the worst miscalculations in Stockholm's 750-year history. The ship itself is a time capsule with over 12,000 objects, and is a brilliant achievement in marine archaeology. Do not miss the movie about the salvage and the slide presentation describing why the ship sank. (Galärvarvet, ☎ 08-519-54800, Bus 44 or 47, vintage tram from Norrmalmstorg or ferry from Slussen; open daily year-round, June 10-Aug 20, 9:30 am-7 pm, the rest of the year, 10 am-5 pm; admission SEK 70.)

Stern ornamentation of the Vasa

■ Södermalm

Most visitors come to the island of Södermalm to see either **Slussen** (the lock), which was originally built in 1642 to facilitate seagoing traffic (it was rebuilt in 1935), or to take a ride up **Katarina Hissen** (the Katarina Elevator), part of an amazing engineering oddity that sticks out over the water like a huge industrial crane. The elevator will haul you up the equivalent of 11 stories to the elegant and popular restaurant and bar called **Gondolen**. The original lift was built in 1883 and powered by steam to carry Stockholmers up the steep mountainside to Mosebacke Torg square. The steam elevator was exchanged for a newer model in 1935. The spectacular view from the top encompasses Lake Mälaren, the Baltic Sea, and a large part Stockholm.

Much of the old-world charm can still be found on the island of Södermalm, known locally only as **Söder** (the Southside). This island rises steeply out of the water and the views from Mosebacke Terrace and the small, red well-preserved wooden houses on Stigbergsgatan Street that date from the 1700s are definitely worth a detour. Right below the street with the charming red houses you will find Fjällgatan Street with perhaps Stockholm's most stunning panoramic view. Söder used to be the great working-class area of the city, although today it is known for its somewhat bohemian atmosphere and is a popular place for artists to live and work. It is also also known for funky shopping, good restaurants and lively nightlife. For those interested in Swedish design, a visit to

Götgatan street is a must. Here you will find Design Torget (with everything from designer furniture to CD postcards), 10-gruppen (which has textiles and unusual accessories), Granit (featuring functional design for home and office) and many other offbeat places to shop.

■ Långholmen

During the 19th century and right up to 1975, this pretty island was the home of one of Sweden's most infamous prisons, also called **Långholmen**. No more a prison, the old penetentiary has turned into a most hospitable hotel and hostel. The island lies just below Västerbron bridge, the longest of Stockholm's 57 bridges, connecting the two largest islands, Södermalm and Kungsholmen. A wonderful walk under oak tree canopies on this long, green island takes you to **Carlhälls Gård**, a manor house built by the prisoners in 1837 for the prison director. During the last three decades of the 19th century, this manor was the summer home of L.O. Smith, known as Brännvinskungen (the King of Akvavit) and the man behind Absolut vodka. Now it is a restaurant, that, for the time being unfortunately, is only open for special events.

■ Kungsholmen

The first recorded inhabitants on Kungsholmen (the king's island) were Franciscan monks who settled here during the15th century when the island was called Munklägret (the monks camp). Today, it is a lovely residential island and the main reason tourists come here is to visit **Stadshuset** (the City Hall). Designed by Sweden's most renowned architect, Ragnar Österberg, this somewhat odd but very attractive brick building is made out of eight million deep red bricks. Its look is part-medieval fortress and part-Italian Renaissance palace. It took 12 years to build and, upon completion in 1923, it had cost 18 million kronor. This was an astronomical amount at that time. It has become the symbol of Stockholm and, with its prominent waterfront location and the sheer size of the unequaled building, you can find your way there by just keeping it in sight. Make sure to time your visit with the guided tours, which is the only way you will get to see the glittering Golden Hall with its 19 million gold leaf mosaics

Stadshustornet

and the magnificent Blue Hall, where the Nobel Prize banquet is held every December 10. There is a spectacular view from the top of the 106-m (348-ft) tower with its three golden crowns. (Hantverkargatan 1, ☎ 08-508-29058, Bus 3 or 62 or T-banan till Rådhuset, guided tours only, in English June-Aug daily, 10 am, 11 am, noon, 2 pm; Sept-May, daily, 10 am and noon; admission SEK 50. **Stadshustornet**, the tower, June-Aug, daily, 10 am-4:30 pm.)

■ More Stockholm Sights

The suburbs of Stockholm do not offer much of interest for visitors unless you want to see where most of the 1.6 million Stockholmers live. However, a ride on **T-banan** or tunnelbanan (the subway) – preferably the blue line – is a very special experience. Just step off the train here and there and take a look at **the world's longest art gallery**, which is 110 km (68 miles) long. In 90 of the 100 subway stations some 140 artists have created sculptures, paintings, mosaics, engravings and various installations, bringing to life an unexpected world of caverns with painted grottoes, depicting the four seasons, springs, ponds and much more. Throughout the year there are also many temporary art exhibits. All T-banan stations are indicated by white signs with a big blue T.

For a great view from above, visit **Kaknästornet,** a TV tower designed by architect Bengt Lindros. This 155-meter (509-ft) Stockholm landmark is a good example of 1960s architecture. The main reason to visit it is the fabulous view from Scandinavia's tallest structure, but there is also a restaurant on top of the observation tower. (Ladugårdsgärdet, ☎ 08-892-435, Bus 69, open daily, June-Aug, 9 am-10 pm, Sept-April, 10 am-9 pm; admission SEK 35.)

Globen

Another highly visible structure is **Globen** (the globe). From almost anywhere in the southern part of Stockholm you can see this enormous round white building (it looks like a snowball or golfball). Supposedly it is the largest spherical structure in the world. Built in less than 2½ years, it was inaugurated in 1989 and is being used for all kinds of special events such as ice hockey games and concerts. It seats up to 16,000 spectators.

Set on a hill on Lidingö island and overlooking the water is **Millesgården**, a magnificent sculpture garden. (Carl Milles Väg 2, ☎ 08-446-7590, T-banan to Ropsten, then train or bus; open daily, May

15-Aug 31, 10 am-5 pm; admission SEK 75.) Carl Milles (1875-1955), Sweden's best-known sculptor, created this wonderful place as a monument to himself and lived here until 1931. He then spent 20 years in the USA and became a US citizen in 1945. The last 10 years of his life he lived in Rome, Italy, but he also spent a lot of time at Millesgården. He is most known internationally for his magnificent fountains; if you do not make it out to the sculpture garden, you can see his Orpheus Fountain outside Stockholm Concert Hall on Hötorget square.

Shopping

If you are short of time or do not consider shopping one of your favorite pastimes, you can find everything from postcards to men's, women's and children's clothing, Swedish crystal to groceries, all under one roof at Åhlens department store. If, on the other hand, you consider shopping a sport, you can do mini-marathons between the 4,000-plus shops that exist in Stockholm.

■ Department Stores

Moderately priced **Åhlens**, Klarabergsgatan 50, carries a great variety of items that you would expect to find in a large department store. It also has a great supermarket in the basement. **PUB**, Drottningagatn 63, has become today more like a shopping mall than a department store. A small exhibit is dedicated to its most famous former employee, Greta Garbo. **NK**, Hamngatan 18-20, is the most upscale of the three and is also turning into a mall with very exclusive stores.

■ Shopping Malls

Stockholm's first shopping mall was **Gallerian**, Hamngatan 37. It looks a lot like many of the malls found in United States. **Sturegallerian**, Grev Turegatan 9, is a smaller mall with indoor streets and squares and some interesting upmarket stores. **PK Huset**, Hamngatan 10, features mostly fashion stores.

■ Shopping Streets

Bibioteksgatan is becoming the Fifth Avenue of Stockholm, a bit smaller than the New York original, but lined with very exclusive brand-name boutiques. Along pedestrian **Drottningatan** there is a mix of large and small stores selling clothing, shoes, toys, items for the kitchen and much more. There are also many street vendors along here. In Gamla Stan, **Västerlångatan** has become the street for souvenirs, but there are also some other stores and **Österlångatan** street has some

great art and also fabric shops. If you want to browse for antiques, **Odengatan** and **Upplandsgatan** are probably your best bets. For those interested in Swedish design, visit **Götgatan** on Söder, where there are lots of small interesting stores that carry a wide variety of Made in Sweden items. Shopping hours vary, but most Stockholm stores are open Mon-Fri, 9:30 am-7 pm, Sat, 10 am-2 or 4 pm; some stores are open on Sun from noon-4 pm.

Where to Stay

Stockholm is no bargain-hunter's favorite when it comes to accommodations but, as in all big cities, the rates are usually substantially lower on weekends, when businesspeople are absent, and during the summer months. Most hotels include breakfast in the room rate and all include taxes and service fees. Some hotels are smoke-free; others offer no smoking rooms. For additional general information about accommodations in Sweden, see page 6.

HOTEL PRICE CHART	
Based on two people in a standard double room, weekday rack rate	
$	Under US$75 (SEK 625)
$$	US$75-150 (SEK 625-1,250)
$$$	US$151-225 (SEK 1,250-1,880)
$$$$	Over US$225 (SEK 1,880)

■ Norrmalm/City

Grand Hotel, Södra Blasieholmen 8,11147 Stockholm, ☎ 08-679-3500, fax 08-611-8686, www.grandhotel.se. Scandinavia's most prestigious hotel and a Stockholm landmark, dating back to 1874. The rooms come in all shapes and sizes, all elegantly appointed with traditional styling and the hotel interiors are unique. This is history, tradition and luxury, with prices to match. Needless to say, the priciest rooms overlook the water. 289 rooms, 21 suites, $$$$.

Berns Hotel, Nackaströmsgatan 8, 11147 Stockholm, ☎ 08-566-32200, fax 08-566-32201, www.berns.se. It is not the most recent of Stockholm's boutique hotels, but hard to beat when it comes to location and to cozy, subdued elegance. An extra plus is the very friendly and professional staff. The hotel is attached to the opulent restaurants and bars of the Berns. 65 rooms, $$$$.

Kung Carl Hotell, Birger Jarlsgatan 21, 10114 Stockholm, ☎ 08-463-5000, fax 08-463-5050, www.hkchotels.se. This classic hotel is

one of the oldest in town. It is discreet, tasteful, with conservatively furnished rooms. Perfectly located at Stureplan, within a few minutes' walk from many of Stockholm's most exclusive shops and restaurants. 112 rooms, $$$$.

Lydmar Hotel, Sturegatan 10, 10114 Stockholm, ☎ 08-566-11300, fax 08-566-11301, www.lydmar.se. A small, chic hotel close to Stureplan with a fashionable interior in black and chrome and with an artsy clientele to match. Individually decorated rooms, some with balconies. Jazz evenings and art exhibits. There's a busy lobby bar and restaurant. 61 rooms and five suites, $$$.

Nordic Light Hotel, Vasaplan 1-7, 10137 Stockholm, and **Nordic Sea Hotel**, Vasaplan, 2-4, 10737 Stockholm, ☎ 08-505-63000, fax 08-505-63060, www.nordichotels.se. Two stylish designer hotels located opposite each other on the Vasaplan square. Each hotel has its own individual design. Nordic Light (175 rooms) is in cool black, white and grey with an award-winning light system. Nordic Sea (367 rooms) is decorated in maritime style. Rooms come in all sizes, cleverly divided into XS, S, M, L and XL – but they all have very comfortable "made in Sweden" beds. Excellent location within a short walking distance from Centralen. Very friendly and service-minded staff. $$$.

Scandic Hotel Sergel Plaza, Brunkebergstorg 9, 10327 Stockholm, ☎ 08-517-26300, fax 08-517-26311, www.scandic-hotels.com. A well-known full-service hotel in central Stockholm, built in 1984. The comfortable guest rooms are done in modern style. The hotel offers a wide variety of facilities, including a nice spa. Popular piano bar. 405 rooms, $$$.

Gustav Wasa Hotel, Västmannagatan 61, 11325 Stockholm 61, ☎ 08-343-801, fax 08-307-3072. A small, friendly family-run hotel – named after a king – centrally located on Odenplan square. The hotel is set in a 19th-century residential building and features large rooms with an interior mix of old and new. A good fit for budget travelers with a light breakfast appetite. 31 rooms, $$.

Rica City Hotel Kungsgatan, Kungsgatan 47, 11157 Stockholm, ☎ 08-723-7272, fax 08-723- 7299, www.rica.se. A well-priced place to stay next door to Hötorget. The hotel occupies the five top floors of the PUB department store building. A modern hotel set in a historic building from 1876. Comfortable rooms. 305 rooms, $$.

■ Gamla Stan

Lady Hamilton, Storkyrkobrinken 5, 11128 Stockholm, ☎ 08-234-680, fax 411-1148, www.lady-hamilton.se. Located in the heart of Gamla Stan and set in a building from the 15th century. Old fashioned Swedish-English interior with plenty of antiques. The hotel has a fireplace, a sauna and a plunge-pool in the cellar. 34 rooms, $$$.

Lord Nelson, Västerlångatan 22, 11129 Stockholm, ☎ 08-232-390, fax 08-101-089, www.lord-nelson.se. A unique building – tall and very narrow – houses this cozy hotel. The small but comfortable rooms boast a maritime décor. Sauna. Roof terrace open during the summer. 29 rooms, $$$.

Mälardrottningen Hotel, Riddarholmen 4, 11128 Stockholm, ☎ 08-243-600, fax 243-676, www.malardrottningen.se. This old elegant white yacht has been a popular hotel since 1982. The comfortable but small cabin-style rooms are suitably decorated in a nautical style. This unusual accommodation has a perfect location. 60 cabins/rooms, $$$.

Rica City Hotel Gamla Stan, Lilla Nygatan 25, 11128 Stockholm, ☎ 08-723-7250, fax 08-723-7259, www.rica.se. A great little hotel with a lot of atmosphere in the heart of Gamla Stan. The charming building dates back to the 17th century. All rooms are newly renovated and decorated in Gustavian style. Great weekend and summer rates. 51 rooms, $$$.

■ Östermalm

Örnsköld Hotel, Nybrogatan 6, 11434 Stockholm, ☎ 08-667-0285, fax 08-667-6991. Located just behind Dramaten (the Royal Dramatic Theater), this small hotel with – if you are not Swedish – an unpronounceable name, is a price-worthy hidden gem. Rather large rooms with high ceilings. The hotel has the feel of a cozy private club. Breakfast is included, but only served in the rooms. 30 rooms, $$.

■ Djurgården

Hasselbacken Hotel, Hazeliusbacken 20, 10055 Stockholm, ☎ 08-517-34300, fax 08-517-34311, www.scandic.com. Located on the beautiful island of Djurgården within easy walking distance of Nordiska Museet, Vasa Museum, Skansen and Gröna Lund, this hotel with modern rooms

has a perfect location for families traveling with children. The striking large pink stone building with white trim also features a sauna, a restaurant and a bar. 112 rooms, $$$$.

■ Södermalm

Hotell Anno 1647, Mariagränd 3, 11646 Stockholm, ☎ 08-442-1680, fax 08-442-1647, www.anno1647.se. This charming and unique hotel is located near the Slussen (the Lock) district in a building from 1647. The small rooms are decorated in 18th-century style. Broad plank pine floors and deep-set windows. Modern bathrooms. A special feature is the original stone spiral staircase, but take note – there are three floors and no elevator. 42 rooms, $$$.

Hotel Rival, Mariatorget 3, 118 91 Stockholm, ☎ 08-545-78900, fax 08-545-78924, www.rival.se. The newest boutique hotel in town, located on the hip and happening island of Söder. In a building from 1937. Bar (with its original Art Deco design intact), bistro, café, bakery and a cinema seating 700 – plenty of opportunities to see and be seen. Owned by former ABBA member Benny Andersson and two partners. 99 rooms, $$$.

■ Långholmen

Långholmen Hotell & Hostel, Kronohäktet, 10272 Stockholm, ☎ 08-720-8500, fax 08-720-8575, www.langholmen.se. A former prison building, built 1881. Closed for "non-paying guests" in 1975. Re-opened in 1982 after extensive makeover as a hotel and hostel. Standard furnishings. Small windows, thick walls and enclosed court yard. Great views of Stockholm and Lake Mälaren. Close to a beach. Restaurant and Pub. 88 single and 13 double rooms, hotel $$, hostel $.

■ Airport

Radisson SAS Skycity-Arlanda Airport, ☎ 08-590-77300 fax 08-593-78100, www.radissonsas.com. An ideal place to stay for an overnight if you're arriving or departing from Arlanda International Airport. Located inside the airport complex, between terminal four and five. Tastefully decorated and soundproof rooms. Excellent breakfast buffet. Good weekend rates. 230 rooms, $$$$.

■ Hostels

Långholmen Hotell & Hostel, see above.

Af Chapman Hostel, Västra Brobanken, (Skeppsholmen) ☎ 08-679-5015, fax 611-9875, www.stfchapman.com. A very popular

youth hostel made from a converted 19th-century schooner. Great location with excellent views over Gamla Stan. 136 beds, $.

Backpackers Inn-Hostel, Banergatan 56, (Östermalm), ☎ 08-660-75015, fax 08-665-4039, www.backpackersinn.se. Located in Gärdesskolan school, open as a hostel during the students' summer holiday. Dorm-style accommodations. Washing machines. 300 beds, $.

City Backpackers, Upplandsgatan 2A, (Norrmalm/City). ☎ 08-206-920, fax 08-100-464, www.citybackpackers.se. A typical Scandinavian hostel, in a 19th-century building, clean and well-run. Perfect location within walking distance from Centralen. 65 beds, $.

Gustav af Klint, Stadsgårdskajen153 (Södermalm) ☎ 08-640-4077, fax 08-640-6416. Another ship-turned-hostel/hotel. Small rooms/cabins. Good location near Slussen. Restaurant and coffee shop. 120 beds, $.

■ Reservation Services

Hotelcentralen, Centralen (the central railway station), ☎ 08-789-2490, fax 08-791-8666, www.stockholmtown.com. Reservation service for hotels in Stockholm and the Archipelago; also general tourist information. Open June-Aug daily, 8 am-8pm, May and Sept, daily 9 am-6pm; Oct-April, Mon-Fri, 9 am-6 pm; Sat-Sun, noon-4 pm.

Bed & Breakfast Service Stockholm, Sidenvägen 17, 17837 Ekerö, ☎ 08-660-5565, fax 08-663-3822, www.bedbreakfast.a.se. Reservation service for bed & breakfast and vacation apartment rentals in Stockholm.

Restaurants & Cafés

During the past two decades, the Stockholm restaurant scene has been busy reinventing itself. Stockholmers are eating out more often than ever, and today Stockholm has more restaurants per capita than any other city in Europe. New upscale restaurants with creative menus and trendy interiors keep popping up, as Swedish chefs are winning international culinary contests. What for quite a while has been a trend in New York and San Francisco has also happened in Stockholm: the star chefs have a loyal following. There is also an array of international eating places, many owned and operated by Sweden's immigrants.

DINING PRICE CHART	
Based on the price of a main course for dinner	
$	Under US$15 (SEK 125)
$$	US$15-30 (SEK 125-250)
$$$	US$31-45 (SEK 251-375)
$$$$	Over US$45 (SEK 375)

There are still many good old, established restaurants around, serving traditional Swedish food. And all over town you will still find the tradi-

tional Swedish Korvkiosk (hot dog stand), serving excellent and inexpensive hot dogs, bratwurst, etc., with a range of condiments. Many today also serve hamburgers.

> **Tip:** If you visit a restaurant, nightclub or bar wearing any kind of outerware, don't even think of hanging it over the back of your chair. You will have to leave it in the cloakroom and pay about 10 SEK to do so. This is strictly enforced in most places.

■ City/Norrmalm

Operakällaren, Karl XII Torg, ☎ 08-676-5801. Operakällaren, in the Opera house, is today a first-class restaurant complex with four restaurants, The Main Dining Room, Café Opera, Bakfickan (the Hip pocket) and Opera Baren. What is commonly referred to as Operakällaren is actually the Main Dining Room. The grande dame of Stockholm is Operakällaren's Main Dining Room, a restaurant since 1787 and classed as a historical monument. With its exquisite early 1900s interior, the restaurant is one of the most beautiful in Sweden. The service is impeccably attentive and both the food and the service outshine the breathtaking setting. Dining at the Operakällaren is a special event – and is priced accordingly. It has one star in Michelin's *Guide Rouge*. **Bakfickan**, ☎ 08-676-5809, is a favorite with local businesspeople and the least formal of the eating places in the Opera house, serving up a fresh selection of traditional Swedish dishes. Outdoor seating in the summertime. Operakällaren $$$$, Bakfickan $$$.

Franska Matsalen (the French dining room), Grand Hotel, Blaiseholmen 8, ☎ 08-665-0300, is the main dining room in the prestigious Grand Hotel. This is a place to go for unabashed glamour and old-world style. It first opened in 1899 and is still as popular as ever among visiting dignitaries as well as the local business community. The menu changes five times a year, but always features fresh fish and red meat. Grand's **Veranda** has a great view and the best lunchtime Smörgåsbord. Go hungry and give yourself plenty of time. Franska Matsalen $$$$, Grands Veranda-Smörgåsbord $$$.

Bon Lloc, Regeringsgatan 111, ☎ 08-660-6060. Bon Lloc (which means good luck in Catalan) has established itself as one of the city's finest dining spots. Mediterranean-Latino top-quality cooking, with a touch of Sweden, has earned award-winning chef Mathias Dahlgren one Michelin star. Booking well ahead is necessary. $$$$.

Fredsgatan 12, Fredsgatan 12, ☎ 08-248-052. This is the modern face of Swedish top-quality cuisine – and of Swedish interior design. Ensconced in a grand old building, this is considered by many to be one of Europe's best restaurants. The excellent cooking has earned Fredsgatan 12 one

star in Michelin. If you do not want to spend a small fortune eating here, it is also a great place to stop for a drink. $$$$.

Wedholms Fisk, Nybrokajen 17, ☎ 08-611-7874. If you have a taste for traditionally prepared seafood, the Swedish way, like a low-key pale and purely stylish décor and excellent service, this restaurant is for you. One star in Michelin. $$$$.

Berns, Berzelii Park, ☎ 08-566-32222. Located in the beautiful Berzelii Park, Berns was built in 1860 as a grand theater hall with restaurants. Today this magnificent brasserie-style restaurant with its attractive bars is again one of the most popular establishments in the city. The impressive décor was recently given a makeover by British design guru Sir Terence Conran, who created a remarkable setting for dinner. Traditional top-rate cooking and a new added attraction, the Crustacean Bar, which is a must for seafood lovers. Live music Wed-Sat. $$$.

East, Stureplan 13, ☎ 08-611-4959. This vibrant Pan-Asian hot spot, just off Stureplan, offers everything from sushi to Thai noodles to Beijing duck to excellent lettuce wraps. Colorful interiors. Popular place for drinks on weekends. $$$.

KB, Smålandsgatan 7, ☎ 08-679-6032. On the ground floor of a very attractive old building called Konstnärshuset (the artist's house), restaurant KB was already very popular among famous artists and actors in the 1930s. It features good Swedish food as well as continental dishes. Both the restaurant and and the informal bar is still frequented by artists, actors and journalists. $$$.

Calle P, Berzelii Park, ☎ 08-566-32515. The pretty pavilion building is a reminder from glamorous days gone by and is today a very popular meeting spot for locals, serving street-smart Italian and Asian dishes. Eat in or take out. $$.

Food, Runebergsgatan 1, ☎ 08-611-9410. Food is a most unique breakfast, brunch and lunch restaurant. The breakfasts are sturdy and the lunch and brunch menu changes weekly. A great mix of international dishes that are all excellent. The comfortable interior is a cross between an old fashioned grocery store and a modern diner. A bit off the tourist trail, but well worth looking for. $$.

Palladium, Casino Cosmopol, Kungsgatan 65, ☎ 08-781-8850. On the second floor of Stockholms International Casino, dinners are being served on a former cinema balcony in a very beautiful setting. The food is good and the service attentive. $$.

Tranan, Karlbergsvägen 14, ☎ 08-527-28100. There is always a crowd seated at the tables at Tranan, a former working-class beer tavern dating back to 1915. Today it's a relaxed bistro-style place and very popular with Swedes who want to dine out without spending a fortune. The menu is only in Swedish, but the waiters speak English and will walk you

through the menu. It features Swedish dishes with a touch of French flair. This is a real place with real food for real people. The cellar bar is a fun place for a drink. $$.

Hötorgshallen & Kungshallen, Hötorget. With one on each side of the Hötorget square in the heart of downtown Stockholm, these food halls are great places for the hungry to go for inexpensive meals. All kinds of of international foodstuffs, from Turkish to Cajun and from Indian to Greek and, of course, sushi. Eat in or take out. $.

Wayne's Coffee. The bright blue signs of Wayne's Coffee – Sweden's answer to Starbuck's – are cropping up all over Stockholm. Serving home-baked goods and freshly made food (including cappuccino and all other coffees). $.

Vette-katten, Klara Norra Kyrkogata 26, ☎ 08-208-405. A café that takes up a whole block of the downtown shopping area. Don't miss the handmade chocolates. $.

■ Gamla Stan

Bistro Ruby, Österlånggatan 14, ☎ 08-205-776. A pretty and popular restaurant with an intimate feel and high vaulted ceilings. Features excellent French-Swedish cuisine. **Grill Ruby** is next door to Bistro Ruby. Serving American style grilled steaks, fish and great fries. On weekends it's a popular place for brunch. Bistro $$$, Grill $$.

Den Gyldene Freden, Österlangatan 51, ☎ 08-109-046. Stockholm's oldest restaurant, open since 1722. On the menu you'll find Swedish fare with continental flair. Favored by lawyers, artists and hip advertising people; once a week the Swedish Academy meets here. $$$.

Mårten Trotzig, Västerlånggatan 79, ☎ 08-442-2530. Set in a charming old yellow building, this restaurant is known all over Sweden for its excellent food. A rather small menu features innovative multicultural dishes. In the summertime less expensive lunch specials are served in a beautiful courtyard setting. $$$.

Café Strömparterren, ☎ 08-219-545. Next door to Medeltidsmuseet, a charming café with a stunning view, built into the walls under the Norrbro bridge. $.

Sundbergs Konditori, Järntorget, ☎ 08-706-735. This delightful little coffee house has been here since 1785. It serves lunch and, from early morning to evening, sandwiches, pastries and the best coffee in town. The hot chocolate isn't bad either. $.

■ Kungsholmen

Linas Bar, Hantverkargatan 84, ☎ 08-650-51-90. Popular with locals, this restaurant serves well-prepared Swedish dishes in good-sized por-

tions. Owned by a former Swedish weightlifting champion, the TV personality Hoa Hoa Dahlgren.

■ Söder

Gondolen, Stadsgården 6, ☎ 08-641-7090, on top of Katarina Hissen. This elegant restaurant has one of the best panoramic views in town and a posh interior. The menu features a mixture of French and Swedish cuisine. Reservations recommended – ask for a table in the "suspended part," which hangs 33 m (108 feet) above the street. There is also a very popular and cozy bar for those who simply wish to enjoy a drink with a view. Another alternative is small dining room, called **Köket** (the kitchen), serving less expensive dishes; but you'll miss out on the fabulous view. Gondolen $$$, Köket $$.

Nils Emils, Folkungagatan 122, ☎ 08-640-7209, has been a Stockholm favorite for years, with many devoted regulars (the author and the royal family included). Classic Swedish cooking at its best with generous portions and reasonable prices. $$$.

Folkhemmet, Renstiernas Gata 30, ☎ 08-640-5595. This popular and lively restaurant with a wonderful relaxed and warm atmosphere serves Swedish home-cooking and international dishes. It offers good value prices on food and on wine. The great bar stays busy, especially on weekends. $$.

Indira, Bondegatan 3 B, ☎ 08-641-4046. This inexpensive Indian restaurant has become a favorite among the locals and serves delicious well-spiced authentic Indian food with friendly and fast service. $.

■ Östermalm

Cucko, Artillerigatan 56, ☎ 08-662-35 62. A relaxed neighborhood bistro-style restaurant and a pleasant atmosphere. The food is delicious and locals dine here often accompanied by both their children and their dogs. Everybody feels welcome. $$.

Sturehof, Stureplan 2, ☎ 08-611-8030. This bustling brasserie is not just a restaurant specializing in Swedish seafood. With its two bars, a visit to this Stockholm institution is a social experience. Located close to Svampen (the Mushroom), the most famous meeting place in Stockholm. $$.

Lisa Elmquist, Östermalms Saluhall, ☎ 08-660-9232, is inside the magnificent covered market, and features seafood specialties – try the fish soup. The seating is limited, so most people eat standing at the counter. Only open for lunch. $$.

Örtagarden, Östermalms Saluhall – entrance from Nybrogatan, upstairs, ☎ 08-662-1728. Even if you imagine every possible way you could prepare vegetables, you will have a hard time coming up with the variety

offered at this truly delightful vegetarian eatery. The homemade bread deserves a special mention. Only open for lunch. $.

SMÖRGÅSBORD

Smörgåsbord Grands Veranda, Grand Hotel, Strömkajen, ☎ 08-679-3500. A magnificent Smörgåsbord is served daily at lunch and at dinnertime from June-Aug. From Sept-May, the Smörgåsbord is served at lunch and dinner on weekends; weekdays at dinner-time only. $$$.

Solliden Restaurant, Skansen, ☎ 08-660-1055. During the summer (beginning of June through Aug) the Smörgåsbord is served daily, from noon to 4 pm. $$$.

■ Internet Cafés

Access It, Kulturhuset, ☎ 08-508-31489.ICE, Vasagatan 42, ☎ 08-248-800.

M@trix, Hötorget, T-bana, ☎ 08-200-293.

IT Café Stockholm, Krukmakargatan 33B, ☎ 08-669-0999.

PUB Internet Café, Drottninggatan, ☎ 08-245-759.

Café Liber, Drottninggatan 87, ☎ 08-312-080.

Nightlife

Many Stockholm restaurants have bars and many bars and nightclubs serve food. So it is difficult to draw a clear line between a restaurant, a bar, a music bar and a nightclub. This probably reflects a time when, by law, most Swedish establishments had to serve food to their customers in order to allow them to buy a drink.

Stockholm provides plenty of choices for night adventures. In the City most of the nightlife is concentrated at the Kungsträdgården, the Berzelii Park area. If you're eager to hang around the real "in" crowd, visit the Stureplan area. But be prepared. Stureplan is also where the bouncers are the least friendly, and don't even think of showing up in this part of town if you are not well-dressed. For a more laid-back scene, you can check out the nightlife on Söder, which mostly caters to a dressed-down crowd. And then there is Gamla Stan, with a mix of people and dress codes. Most importantly, if you look below 30 or so, remember to bring your photo ID. Many nightspots have a minimum age limit of 23

(some, 25, others, 27), although the legal drinking age in restaurants and bars in Sweden is 18.

On Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays you should be prepared to wait in long lines; and, even then, when you get to the door, you might be turned away. The bouncers, or door-hosts as some night-spot owners like to call them, are extremely powerful people. If they decide that you fit the right image, you will then have the privilege of paying an entrance fee of somewhere around $10-15 just to get through the door, and then you will be expected to pay top-kronor for the drinks. As in all big cities, there is a rather high turnover when it comes to the night spots, so for the latest updates pick up either *Nöjesguiden* (the entertainment guide), a free monthly paper found in most bars and restaurants, or a copy of *Stockholm This Week* from the Tourist Center.

■ Bars, Music Bars & Nightclubs

(Also see the restaurant listing on page 59.)

Akkurat, Hornsgatan 18, Söder. An amazing place, with well over 200 types of whisky and a huge beer selection. Frequent beer and whiskey tasting evenings and, yes, many of the foods served also include a dash of these liquids.

Berns, Berzelii Park, includes several attractive bars that combine the best of the old and the new and that cater to all tastes. Good music, great drinks and a relaxed atmosphere. There is also a nightclub called **Le**, a dark intimate grotto downstairs in the basement, usually filled with a clubby 25-30-year-old crowd. Le is open Thursday through Saturday to 4 am.

Cadier Bar, Södra Blasieholmshamnen 8, in the Grand Hotel. This bar, named after the hotel's French founder, is one of the most sophisticated places for a drink in the city. The drinks are expensive, but the view and atmosphere are unbeatable. Open Mon through Sat from noon to 2 am, Sun, from noon to 12:30 am.

Café Opera, Kungsträdgården. In the Operahouse, this chic brasserie-style establishment is an updated version of the original 1895 Opera Kafé, that at night turns into a nightclub. After the re-opening in 1980 it – almost overnight – became the place to be seen and got nicknamed Kaféet or Fiket (the Café), holding its place as the hottest nightspot for the rich, famous and beautiful until the mid-nineties. The guest list of celebrities was impressive. Then, again almost overnight, the beautiful people moved on to nightspots around Stureplan. After a short closing and a makeover, Café Opera re-opened in January 2002. The atmosphere has been altered, but without damaging the impressive stucco work, the beautifully painted ceiling and the exquisite crystal

chandeliers. On many nights long lines form outside, and it looks as if Kaféet once again is the place to be seen.

Engelen, Kornhamnstorg 59, Gamla Stan, offers live jazz, blues or rock seven nights a week. The bar serves light food and drinks from 4 pm to 1 am (weekends it closes at 3 am). **Nightclub Kolingen** is at the same address, downstairs in a 600-year-old cellar. Dancing from 10 pm to 3 am.

Fasching, Kungsgatan 63, Norrmalm/City. This legendary establishment has been featuring great jazz for decades. There is lunch-time jazz, after-work jazz and, of course, night-time jazz. Fasching is a restaurant, a bar and a club, featuring concerts, dancing and lots of special events.

Ice Bar, Vasaplan 4-7, 08 50 56 35 51, is without a doubt Stockholm's "coolest" bar, and a unique place to sip vodka from an ice-hewn glass. You are totally surrounded by ice. Bar guests do not have to fear the cold, since they are decked out in fur-lined ponchos, mittens and warm boots, all included in the cover charge. Open from 3 pm to midnight.

Kharma, Sturegatan 10, as of this writing the newest of the favored nightspots among the successful and beautiful 30-somethings. The décor is Oriental, with lots of pink. Nightclub bar and lounge bar. A good way to get a foot inside the door is to start the evening in the restaurant; it accepts reservations. The menu is Asian-French.

Lydmar, Sturegatan 10. An excellent bar and definitely one of the most popular among the city's chic crowd. A couple of nights a week this hotel bar features live music, most of the time unannounced and most often jazz and soul.

O-bar, Stureplan 2, located upstairs from the Sturehof restaurant, is a place for late-night drinks and loud music.

Pontus by the Sea (Gamla Stans Bryggeri-Old Town Brewery), Skeppsbrokajen. To get a feel of the archipelago, visit this large brewpub located in an old customs house, right on the breathtaking waterfront in Gamla Stan. The bar offers indoor and outdoor seating, serving lunch, dinner and snacks. There is live music some evenings. Open from mid-May to mid-Sept and during the month of December for a traditional *julbord* (the Christmas variation of *smögåsbord*).

Stampen, Stora Nygatan 5, Gamla Stan. This a place for jazz lovers of all ages, though the crowd is mostly in their 30s and 40s. There is live jazz, mainstream, Dixieland, New Orleans – all nights except Tuesday when it's Rock n' Roll night. Open from 8 pm to 1 am (Sat to 2 am).

Sturecompagniet, Sturegatan 4, has three floors of bars, seven in all and almost as many dance floors – with something for everybody. Since it opened in 1989, this has been an important place to see and be seen. Be prepared to wait in line. The hottest entry ticket is to the gay-friendly Rainbow Room.

■ The Gay Scene

Even though Stockholm has recently replaced Copenhagen as the Gay Capital of Scandinavia, the gay scene is low-key, except during the Gay Pride Festival, a yearly event held in the beginning of August. The gay bar and club scene is constantly changing. For up-to-date listings of bars and clubs pick up a copy of *QX*, a gay magazine published in Swedish and English. It is sold at most Stockholm newsstands.

Chokladkoppen, Stortorget 18, is a cute small café open from 10 am to 10pm, where you can enjoy the best hot chocolate in town as you browse through flyers and tickets to gay parties.

Häcktet, Hornsgatan 82, Wed and Fri from 7 pm to 1 am. Mixed gay guys and lesbian girls. Disco music.

The Disco, Torsgatan 1, is open every Wed, Fri, and Sat from 8 pm to 3 am. Restaurant. Busiest days are Fridays.

Mandus, Österlånggatan 7, Gamla Stan, is a small friendly bar and restaurant Open from 5 pm to midnight. It has won awards for best gay place, best restaurant and friendliest staff.

Patricia, Stadsgårdskajen 152 (Sundays). Once owned by the Queen Mother, this is now a floating restaurant with three bars. Mixed straight and gay Wed-Sat. Gay every Sunday from 7 pm to 5 am, when it's frequented by gays from all walks of life.

Regnbågsrummet, Sturecompagniet, is a luxurious nest for gays and other happy party people – a 50/50 mix, according to the management. This always-crowded bar is one of the most difficult ones to get into. Recommendation: wear something outrageous.

Sidetrack, Wollmar Yxkullsgatan 7, is open every night from 6 pm to 1 am. Small and unassuming, it caters to regular guys who happen to be gay.

SLM (Scandinavian Leather Men), Wollmar Yxkullsgatan 18, is open Wed, Fri and Sun from 10 pm to 2 am. This is Stockholm's first and foremost leather bar.

Tip Top, Sveavägen 57, club and bar in the "Gay House" is open daily, 8 pm-3 am, and is a good mingling place to start your Stockholm visit. All are welcome, but the clientele is predominantly gay.

The Waters of Stockholm

One third of Stockholm is water, with Gamla Stan as a divider between **Lake Mälaren** and **Lake Saltsjön**, which leads out to the archipelago and the Baltic Sea. The narrow waterways

in between the small and large islands are perfect for leisurely paddling a rented kayak or canoe. And for a unique fishing expedition, just place yourself on a pretty city bridge, fishing pole in hand, and look down into the clear, sparkling and pollution-free city waters. Fishing has been allowed here since the 15th century and today, in a most unusual fishing environment, perch, pike, trout, salmon and some additional 25 varieties of fish are thriving. For city island-hopping and for guided nautical tours, see page 73.

Canoe, Kayak & Rowboat Rental

Djurgårdsbrons Sjöcafé, Galärvarvsvägen 2, ☎ 08-660-5757.

Brunnsvikens Kanot Central, Hagavägen 5, Frescati, ☎ 08-155-060.

Kafé Kajak, Smedsuddsvägen 23, ☎ 08-738-0600.

Fishing Equipment Rental

Berras Sportfiske, Valhallavägen 46, ☎ 08-158-470.

Fiskarnas Redskapshandel, St Paulsgatan 2-4, ☎ 08-556-6050.

■ Lake Mälaren

West of the city, Lake Mälaren is dotted with roughly 150 pretty islands – some with summer houses, some with permanent residences and some with castles. This is sometimes called the western archipelago. Two of the most popular islands to visit are **Lovön** and **Björkö**.

Lovön & Drottningholm

A wonderful hour-long steamboat trip on the lake takes you to **Drottningholm Slott** (the Drottningholm Palace) on the leafy island of Lovön. Since 1981 it has been the home of the Swedish royal family. The Drottningholm palace and gardens were designed and built by the same father-and-son team that built Kungliga Slottet (page 44). Drottningholm is a splendid example of a northern European 18th-century royal residence (☎ 08-402-6280, boat from Stadshusbron, June-Aug 31 daily 10 am-4:30 pm, admission SEK 60). On the domain is also the spectacular **Kina Slott** (the Chinese Pavilion), built as a surprise birthday present for Queen Lovisa Ulrika in 1753. The lacquer-red walls and sculptural decoration is a mix of European Rococo and oriental decorative arts (☎ 08-402-6270, May-Aug 31 daily 11 am-4:30 pm, admission SEK 50). UNESCO has classified all of Drottningholm as a world heritage site.

Did you know? The most amazing building on the royal grounds is the unequaled and perfectly preserved **Drottningholms Slottsteater** (the court theater), built in 1766. It is the world's only unrestored 18th-century theater where performances are still given. King Gustav III had the theater built to stage performances for 200 friends and courtiers. Plays and operas are presented in the summertime, using the original stage props. Just take any ticket you can get for a once-in-a-life-time experience (☎ 08-556-93100, June-Aug 31 daily, 11 am-4:30 pm, admission SEK 60).

■ Björkö & Birka

Set on the verdant island of Björkö a bit farther west of Lovön, is **Birka**, an ancient Viking trading center that was Sweden's first sizable community, dating back more than 1,200 years. The site is surrounded by the largest Viking cemetery that has ever been discovered, with more than 3,000 graves. The archaeologists are still excavating, and more of the fascinating Viking history is being uncovered (☎ 08-560-51445, boat from Stadshusbron, May to mid-Sept daily 10 am-5 pm, SEK 235 including boat trip). Do not miss the excellent **Viking Museum**.

Viking era beaker from Birka

Birka is also where Christianity first came to Sweden, when a missionary by the name of Ansgar arrived from Saxony in the first part of the ninth century. Guided tours are available and there are plenty of signposts for those who want to look around on their own. Birka is also on UNESCO's World Heritage list.

■ Skärgarden – The Archipelago

East of the city the archipelago seems endless, with 24,000 islands, islets and rocks extending nearly 150 km (93 miles) north and south along the coast and 60 (38 miles) east into the Baltic Sea. Close to the mainland, the islands are larger and greener; farther out in the sea the scenery becomes more rugged, the islands barer, finally ending up as small islets and skerrets looking like chunks of rock that has been spewed up by the sea. In the 19th century the archipelago became popular with the wealthy and famous for summer visits. Today, they are home to 10,000 permanent residents and are a favored summer playground for Stockholmers and also for Swedes from other parts of the country. This

spectacular and unequaled world of islands is now slowly being discovered by international visitors. Throughout the summer months Stockholmers make weekend pilgrimages to the over 50,000 summer homes built on the islands and to hotels and rental cottages. Or else they spend the time on their boats, cruising from island to island. Wherever you look in the waters of Stockholm there are boats, boats, boats. In addition to the high number of passenger vessels there are also an estimated 200,000 privately owned pleasure boats that cruise in a labyrinth of waterways between the islands.

For more than 150 years one of the distinctive features in the deep blue water has been the white passenger steamships traveling the archipelago. Today, eight of these old beauties are still in operation and, together with some remodeled motorized versions and many more modern vessels, they are making it easy to get around. Some of the archipelago can also be visited by car, traveling on the yellow no-charge ferries. Most of the larger islands are fairy-tale pretty, many dotted with traditionally painted houses – dark-red with white trim – tall flagpoles flying the blue and yellow Swedish flag, with pine and birch woods in all shades of green. But most islands – fewer than 200 are inhabited – have no man-made facilities at all, just natural harbors, unspoiled nature and wildlife. Perfect hideaways for a little splendid isolation.

Exploring the entire archipelago would probably take a lifetime, but there are plenty of options to get a feel of the islands even for those with limited time. Rent a cottage for a week or more, do some island hopping and stay in a hotel, a hostel or a B&B, rent a kayak, join a paddle-safari, spend a day or a week on a chartered sailboat or just take a day-trip or evening cruise on one of the many excursion boats. The options are endless. Just do not leave Stockholm without at least taking a half-day tour in the waters of Stockholm. Preferably, buy a *Båtluffarkort* (island-hopper card) and give yourself time to explore.

Below are a find a few handpicked archipelago gems (all best visited from the beginning of June through August). The best places to stay and eat are given for each.

Fjäderholmarna - The Feather Islands

This cluster of four islands was for many years part of a military zone, but, since the the mid-eighties, they have been open to the public. The islands are located very close to the center of Stockholm – only 25 minutes by boat. In the old days, before the military, this was the last refreshment stop for the islanders as they rowed into or out of the city. Today you will find a typical archipelago atmosphere with historic buildings, small shops and a great restaurant only minutes from the bustling city.

Fjäderholmarnas Krog restaurant, ☎ 08-718-3355. Set in a wooden building with a veranda and large windows, in traditional archipelago

style, this restaurant serves fresh, light and well-prepared classic Swedish dishes in a relaxed atmosphere. $$$.

Vaxholm

Within an hour by boat you will reach the small, idyllic compact archipelago town of Vaxholm, founded in 1647. It has a picturesque harbor and lots of small, attractive handicraft shops and a few restaurants. Around town there is a beautiful countryside for hiking. Within easy reach from town, only five minutes by ferry, lies a small island with the Vaxholm Castle and the Fortress Museum. This little town is known as "The Gate to the Archipelago" because of the many boat-people and island residents who stop here to fuel up and to shop before departing to different destinations in the archipelago.

Waxholms Hotel, Hamngatan 2, Vaxholm, ☎ 08-541-30150, fax 08-541-31376. The hotel is set on the harbor close to boat and ferry landing. Nice clean rooms, most of them with a great water view. 32 rooms, $$. The hotel's dining veranda offers an international menu and a great view. $$.

Gröna Caféet, ☎ 08-541-3151. In a lovely green garden setting, this little café serves tasty open-faced sandwiches. $.

Utö

This island is located far out in the southern part of the archipelago, about three hours by boat from Stockholm. In 1150, Sweden's first iron mine was established here, and there is now an interesting mining museum to visit. You can hike and bike through the island woods to abandoned iron mines or go on fishing trips, join archipelago safaris or rent a kayak. Just check with the Tourist Information (Utö Turistrbyrå) located in the busy little harbor.

Utö Värdshus (hotel, restaurant and pub), Gruvbryggan, ☎ 08-501-57079, fax 08-571-53240, www.utovardshus.se. Two hotel buildings (Stenhotellet, with six rooms, and Kvarnvillan, with eight rooms) have rather large rooms and rustic furniture; there are also cottages/cabins with kitchenettes available. $$. For a lower-priced option, try Utö Vandrarhem (same contact numbers), a hostel with 44 beds. $. The **Utö Värdshus Restaurant and Pub** is located in the main hotel building, serving innovative dishes with an international flair, made with local ingredients. $$.

Restaurant Båtshaket, on neighboring Ålö, ☎ 08-501-57463. Owned and operated by a charming husband-and-wife team, it serves excellent food. $.

> **Two Utö Musts:** Sample the **Utö limpa**, a popular loaf of bread that Swedish boaters make a detour for, and buy a scoop or two of **lingonberry ice cream** from Hamnmagasinet's kiosk.

Sandön

The island's name is Sandön, located about three hours from Stockholm by boat, but it is best-known for its village of **Sandhamn**. This village, with its narrow alleys, closely set houses and its wonderful harbor, is without a doubt the most popular destination for yachtsmen in the entire archipelago. The Royal Swedish Yacht Club (KSSS) was established here 100 years ago and has been a meeting place for seafarers since the 18th century. Sandhamn gets extremely busy during the summer months. It is also the starting point for the famous "Gotland Runt" sailing regatta. A big draw, in addition to the gilded Sandhamn name, are the many great sandy beaches.

Sandhamns Hotel, ☎ 08-571-53170, fax 08-574-50450, is a famous and popular hotel, restaurant and bar set in an archipelago-style building overlooking the local harbor. Has all the comforts for a first-class vacation. Indoor-outdoor pool, sauna and gym. 81 rooms and three suites, $$$.

Sandhamns Värdshus, ☎ 08-571-53051, fax 08-571-53240, a restaurant and bar located in a bright yellow inn, has been in business since 1672; it's a great place to stop for a meal and some people-watching. Outdoor seating on a large veranda is offered in the summertime. They specialize in local seafood dishes. $$$.

Restaurant Dykarbaren, ☎ 08-571-53554, a harborside restaurant with an informal atmosphere and a touch of Brittany, serves local fish with a hint of France. $$.

> **A Sandhamn Must:** Visit the 150-year-old bakery, **Sandhamn Bageri**, and try some "sailor's buns" (rolls made with butter, cardamom and raisins).

Grinda

This a lush island with ferns, birch and pine trees, green fields, and sandy beaches is only two hours from Stockholm by boat. It's a nature reserve, with very pretty walking trails and wonderful old gravel roads, and has become one of the most popular islands. Rowboat rentals available.

Grinda Wärdshus (hotel, restaurant and pub), ☎ 08-542-49491, fax 08-542-49497. At the water's edge, this former private villa built in 1906 is one of the largest stone buildings in the archipelago. The common areas are bright and homey, the rooms comfortable. Do not miss the spectacular view from the hill behind the inn. 34 rooms, $$. The Grinda Wärdshus restaurant, an award-winner serves modern Swedish dishes. $$.

Grinda Vandrarhem och Stugby is a hostel with cottages, ☎ 08-542-49072. $.

Stora Kalholmen

This is the place for those who want to to get away from all touristy stuff and spend a night or more on a true nature-preserve island.

Stora Kalholmen Vandrarhem (hostel); pre-season bookings by fax 08-571-60125. This is the only accommodation on the island, a red two-story house with white gables. It was built as the summer residence for the personal doctor of King Oscar II and Gustaf V. Since 1981 it has been a hostel, the oldest one in the archipelago. Even though there is no electricity or running water, this small hostel is very popular. There is no restaurant, so bring your own food. Book well in advance. $.

Ängsö National Park

The idyllic little archipelago island of Ängsö was designated a National Park already in 1909. Easy walking paths take visitors over meadows in spring with a wealth of flowers, ancient farm landscapes and through Ängsö forest – one of the best-preserved virgin forests in the Archipelago. It is a delightful place.

■ Getting Here & Getting Around

Boats with scheduled boat services to the archipelago leave from the Nybrokajen and the Strömkajen quays. Boats serving Lake Mälaren depart from Stadshusbron bridge near City Hall. One-way tickets – starting at SEK 55 – are sold on board.

Båtluffarkortet (The Island Hopper Pass, also known as the Inter Skerret Pass) is a 16-day archipelago pass with unlimited travel throughout the archipelago. Ideal for those who are planning to really discover the archipelago. Plan on a couple of extra days, since you will be tempted to do detours. Cost is SEK385. Don't forget to ask for the routing map when you buy your ticets.

> **Tip:** A great website for planning your island hopping routes is www.waxholmsbolaget.se.

Buy your Island Hopper Pass at Tourist Center-Sweden House, SL Centers or Waxholmsbolagets terminals Tourist Center-Sweden House, Hamngatan 27, Kungsträdgården, ☎ 08-789-2490, fax 08-789-2491, info@stoinfo.se, www.stockholmtown.com.

Boat, Ferry & General Archipelago Information

Vaxholms Tourist Bureau
Söderhamnsplan, S-185 83 Vaxholm
☎ 08-541-31480, fax 08-541-33653
Specialists on all that concerns Vaxholm, but also nearby islands.

Utö Tourist Bureau
Gruvbryggan, S-130 56 Utö
☎ 08-501-57410, L 08-501-5742
Information on all that relates Utö and nearby islands.

Strömma Kanalbolag & Cinderella
☎ 08-587-14000, www.strommakanalbolaget.com
Offers sightseeing on boats in the Stockholm and archipelago waters and also scheduled sailings in Lake Mälaren and the archipelago.

Waxholmsbolaget
☎ 08-679-5830, www.waxholmsbolaget.se
Serving the archipelago islands with scheduled sailings throughout the year.

Båttaxi (Boat-Taxi)

A convenient, but expensive, way to get between the islands.

Sandhamns Båttaxi, ☎ 08-571-53550

Svartsö Båttaxi, ☎ 08-542-47800

Sailing Charters

Thindra Charter, Sjövillan, Örlogsvägen 1, 11149 Stockholm ☎ 08-545-07750, www.sjovillan.se. Skippered charters (*Swan 46* sleeps six) from SEK 14,500 per day, 55,000 per week.

Canoe & Kayak Rental & Tours in the Archipelago

Skärgårdens Kanotcenter, Vaxholm, ☎ 08-541-37790, Skärgårdens Kajaker, Uto, ☎ 08-501-57668, www.skargardsgumman.com, also organizes kayak tours, paddle safaris and other adventures.

Fishing Guides in the Archipelago

Skärgårdens, ☎ 0705-120-405, www.skargardsguiderna.nu.
Swedish Fishguiding Tours, ☎ 08-298-649, www.fishguide.se.

Bike Rental

Cyclerent, Utö harbor, ☎ 08-501-574-50.

Reservation Services

Hotelcentralen, Centralen (the central railway station), ☎ 08-789-2490, fax 08-791-8666, www.stockholmtown.com. Reservation service for hotels in Stockholm and the Archipelago; also general tourist information. Open June-Aug daily, 8 am-8pm; May and Sept daily, 9 am-6pm; Oct-April, Mon-Fri, 9 am-6pm; and Sat-Sun, noon-4 pm.

Archipelago Cottage/Chalet Rental

Cottages/chalets are normally rented by the week. They can be occupied from 3 pm on Saturday and vacated by noon on the following Saturday. Prices vary according to standard, location, size, swimming facilities etc. Bookings: **Destination Stockholms Skärgård AB**, Lillström, 184 97 Ljusterö, ☎ 08-542-48100, fax 08-542-41400, dess.skarg@dess.se, www.dess.se.

North Sweden

Norrland or North Sweden, sometimes called "Arctic Sweden," is a vast region starting at around latitude 62°. It covers about half of the country and over 15% of its land lies above the Arctic Circle. A wondrous place, it is happily uncrowded, with pure unpolluted air, crystal-clear waters, wide-open spaces and mountainous landscapes. The winters are long and dark and the summers short and light. This is the Land of the Midnight Sun.

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To get a feel for the many types of landscape in this huge area, we will start in Stockholm and follow E4 (Europe Highway 4) north. We'll travel along the fascinating coastline of the Bothnian Bay, also called the Gulf of Bothnia, the northern extension of the Baltic Sea, and all the way to the Finnish border. From there, we head northwest, inland to Kiruna, the main city in Swedish Lappland. From there, we'll travel south, through the sparsely populated provinces of Lappland, Jämtland and Härjedalen. This is Europe's last wilderness, untamed and unsophisticated, but with unsurpassed natural beauty. Keep in mind that in summer you will be entering "mosquito country" here.

The Bothnian Bay & Midnight-Sun Coast

The whole stretch of beautiful coast from Stockholm to Haparanda at the Finish border is over 1,050 km (633 miles). If, for some odd reason, you would like to make this trip into a non-stop midnight-sun marathon, it would take about 15 hours of driving. But you would miss out on all the beautiful and interesting places dotted out along the coast. Instead, you should plan for shorter drives and make time for frequent stops and detours. Should you prefer not to drive, there is good public transportation via trains, buses and boats. Many of the larger cities along the coast are also served by air from Stockholm.

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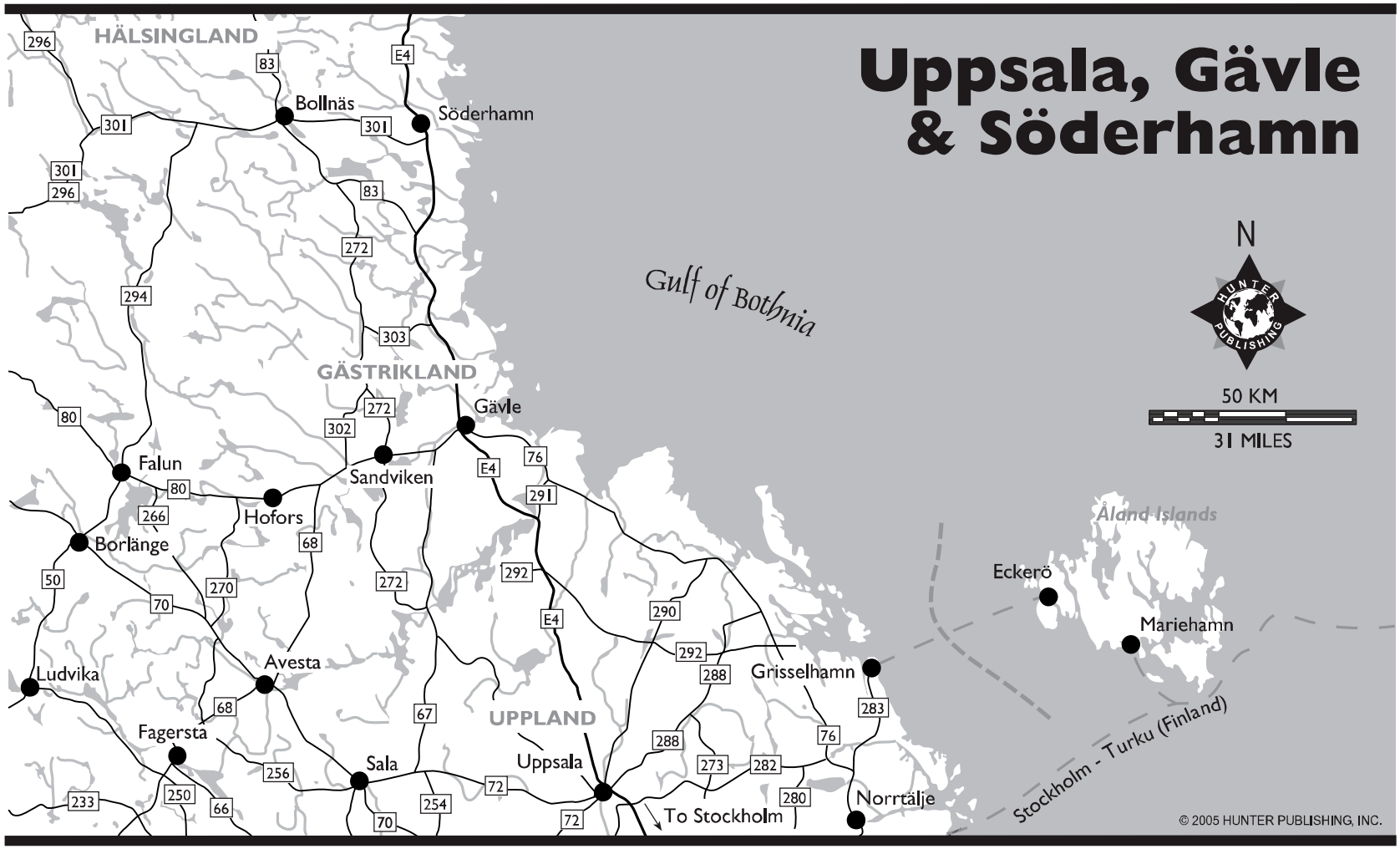
Uppsala, Gävle & Söderhamn
HÄLSINGLAND
GÄSTRIKLAND
UPPLAND
Gulf of Bothnia
Åland Islands
Bollnäs
Söderhamn
Gävle
Falun
Sandviken
Hofors
Borlänge
Ludvika
Avesta
Fagersta
Sala
Uppsala
Grisselhamn
Eckerö
Mariehamn
Norrtälje
To Stockholm
Stockholm - Turku (Finland)
N
50 KM
31 MILES
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After leaving Stockholm and before reaching the coast, a stop in the city of Uppsala is recommended. The Bothnian Bay coast starts in the industrial province of Gästrikland, then continues through the province of Hälsingland, which has deep forests and a pretty coastline, moves on to the small and lake-filled province of Medelpad, before reaching the highlight of this coast, the province of Ångermanland and the spectacular Höga Kusten (the High Coast) area. Up until recently, this area was one of the best-kept secrets in Sweden. In November, 2000 the secret was out when UNESCO included Höga Kusten in its prestigious list of World Heritage Sites. Our trip continues on to the wild and rugged province of Västerbotten, up to Norrbotten and to Norrlands Riviera (the Riviera of the North), then finally to the Finnish border.

Uppsala & the Province of Uppland

Only 65 km (40 miles) north of Stockholm is the "City of Learning," **Uppsala**. Built around the Fyrisån river that flows right through the town, it is an old city with a young population that houses one of Europe's leading universities.There is a rich and interesting history here mixed with many green parks and charming, eccentric old buildings.

■ Tourist Information

Uppsala Tourist Office, Fyristorg 8 753 10 Uppsala, ☎ 018-727-4800, fax 018-132-895, www.uppsalatourism.se. Open mid-June to mid-Aug, Mon-Fri, 10 am-6 pm; Sat, 10 am-3 pm and Sun, noon-4 pm. From mid-Aug to mid-June, Mon-Fri, 10 am-6 pm; Sat, 10 am-3 pm.

ABOUT THE TOURIST OFFICES

Opening hours for the tourist offices keep changing, but as a rule of thumb the offices in the towns and cities are open year-round, Mon-Fri, 9 am to 5 pm, Sat, 10 am to 2 pm. During the high season in summer, the hours are usually extended. Most of the tourist information centers in the smaller resort towns and villages are usually only open during the summer season. The local tourist offices will assist with bicycle and kayak rental, fishing permits, accommodations and much more.

■ Getting Here

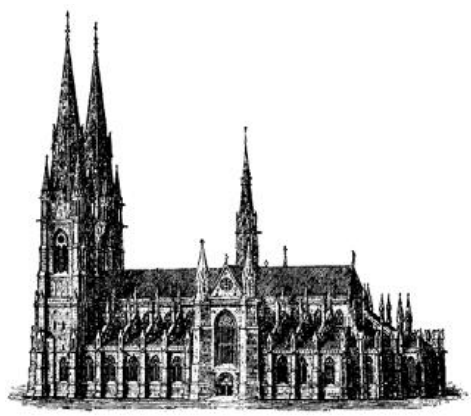
The area is less than an hour's easy drive or train ride from Stockholm, with frequent train departures. Most international and domestic flights into Stockholm land at Arlanda Interna-

tional Airport, conveniently situated 35 km (22 miles) south of Uppsala. An airport bus (#801) runs several times every hour; it takes 40 minutes and the fare is SEK 75.

■ Getting Around

Within the city, it is best to go on on foot or with local buses. **Uppsala Kortet** (the Uppsala Card) provides free admission to museums, free parking in designated areas, half-price on many activities, unlimited travel on public transportation, and a free information folder with a map. It is valid June-August. The cost is SEK 80 for 24 hours, SEK 130 for 48 hours and SEK 160 for 72 hours. There is also a "Family Card" available that costs SEK 170 for 24 hours (two adults and three children). The cards can be purchased at the tourist office.

■ Sightseeing



From the the bus and train station, head toward Fyrisån, which divides Uppsala into the new and the old parts of the city. On the western side stands **Uppsala Domkyrka** (Uppsala Cathedral), the largest church in Sweden. This impressive symmetrical red brick, twin-spired cathedral, consecrated in 1435, dominates the city. It is located in the old, compact and historic area that also houses Uppsala Universitet, the oldest university in the country, along with many museums and pretty parks. Head up to the domed 16th-century castle, built during the Vasa dynasty, for a splendid view of the river, the city, and its cathedral.

One of the most impressive green areas is **Uppsala Botaniska Trädgård** (Botanical Gardens), where a maze of hedges leads to the Orangerie. Here a laurel tree still stands that was planted in the 18th century by the famous botanist Carl von Linné (Linneaus), known as the "Father of Botany." He was educated here and also lived in Uppsala for many years. His residence, surrounded by an excellent botanical garden, is now a museum. Yet another delightful green area is **Stadsparken** (the city park) by the Fyrisån River.

Five km (three miles) north of town lies **Gamla Uppsala** (old Uppsala), with the fascinating Kungshögarna, three huge royal grave mounds, dating back to the sixth century. They dominate the grave fields around **Gamla Uppsala Kyrka**, a Christian church that was built atop Scandi-

Gamla Uppsala Kyrka

navia's last heathen temple. The church is open to visitors, and inside you can see the tomb of Anders Celsius, the inventor of the centigrade temperature scale that bears his name.

■ Where to Stay

First Hotel Linné, Skolgatan 45, Uppsala, ☎018-102-000, www.firsthotels.com. Great location right by the Linneaus Gardens. Small, tastefully decorated rooms in Swedish style. A fabulous wine bar serves 200 varieties by the glass. 116 rooms, $$$.

HOTEL PRICE CHART	
Based on two people in a standard double room, weekday rack rate	
$	Under US$75 (SEK 625)
$$	US$75-150 (SEK 625-1,250)
$$$	US$151-225 (SEK 1,250-1,880)
$$$$	Over US$225 (SEK 1,880)

Grand Hotel Hörnan, Bangårdsgatan 1, Uppsala, ☎ 018-139-380, www.eklundshof.se. An old, elegant, but cozy hotel in the center of town. Newly renovated, with nice spacious old-fashioned rooms. There are 37 rooms, $$.

Bed and Breakfast Agency Uppsala, ☎018-421-030, fax 018-421-030, is an excellent reservation service for B&Bs, holiday apartments and cottages in and around Uppsala.

Sunnersta 1, Sunnerstavägen 24, ☎ 018-324-220. This hostel is set in a beautiful manor on the river, about five km (three miles) south of the city

center. Bus 20, 25 or 50. Fifty beds during the summer, 20 beds the rest of the year, $.

■ Where to Eat

Pub Notton, Svartbäcksgatan 19, is a great place for lunch.

Hambergs Fisk, Fyristorget 8, is one of the best places in town for fish and seafood.

Stiernhems Krog, Stiernhemsgatan 7, ☎ 018-259-500, serves Italian-inspired dishes.

DINING PRICE CHART	
Based on the price of a main course for dinner	
$	Under US$15 (SEK 125)
$$	US$15-30 (SEK 125-250)
$$$	US$31-45 (SEK 251-375)
$$$$	Over US$45 (SEK 375)

Domtrappkällaren, St. Eriksgränd, ☎ 018-130-955, features Swedish food with a bit of French flair, served in the vaulted cellars of a former prison.

■ Nightlife

Katalin, Östra Station, ☎ 018-140-680. This restaurant is located in an old warehouse building behind the train station. It serves good food, has a great bar and features jazz and blues in the evenings.

Alex Vinbar, Skolgatan 45, ☎ 018-102-000. A jazz and wine bar with lots of atmosphere.

■ Adventures

On Wheels

Travel on a steamtrain, **Lennakatten**, or a vintage rail-bus over a 33-km (20-mile) track. This is the longest museum rail track in Scandinavia. ☎ 018-130-500.

Bicycle Rental: Rental bicycles, mountain bikes and tandems are available at **Fjällnora** open-air recreational ground. ☎ 018-727-0610.

On Water

The 112-year-old ship M/S ***King Carl Gustaf***, ☎ 018-144-800 offers cruises on the Fyrisån River. Guided day-tours in beautiful natural surrounding are offered. Daily departures from the end of May to mid-Aug. The M/S ***Östana*** or M/S ***Enköping***, ☎ 018-121-230, will take you on a Lake Mälaren Royal Cruise to Stockholm, with stops along the historic waterway. This one-way tour takes nine hours and you can spend a night in Stockholm or return to Uppsala by train. The cruise

can also be started in Stockholm. Cost is SEK 710 one-way, including boat trip, lunch, dinner, entrance fees and guiding.

Canoe & Kayak Rental: Fjällnora Open-Air Recreational Ground, ☎ 018-727-0610, rents canoes, Canadians and kayaks, row boats and pedal boats. They can also provide trailers and canoe racks.

Gävle & the Province of Gästrikland

Continuing on E4 north after crossing Dalävlen River, known for its abundance in fish, you will get to the coastal city of Gävle and the province of Gästrikland. Situated 180 km (111 miles) north of Stockholm Gävle is considered the gateway to Norrland (North Sweden). Today this mainly industrial and commercial city does not have a lot to offer tourists. During the time most buildings in Sweden were constructed of wood, fires here were the worst enemy, just as they were all over the country. The last major fire in this city occurred in 1869 when some 8,000 of the 10,000 inhabitants lost their homes and over 350 farms were totally destroyed. After that catastrophic disaster most buildings were made out of stone.

If you make a stop here, a visit to **Joe Hill Museet** could be interesting. It is dedicated to Joel Hägglund, who was born in Gävle in 1879 and then changed his name to Joe Hill after immigrating to America in 1902. He was a hobo, a songwriter and became a dedicated member of the Industrial Workers of the World. His life ended at sunrise on a cold November day in 1915, when a Utah firing squad took aim at him. Now, more than nine decades later, his fate is still being debated. Was he guilty of the murder he was convicted of, or could he have been framed?

THE CHRISTMAS GOAT

Gävle's claim to international fame is Gevalia coffee and **Julbocken** (the Christmas goat). The strange and true story of the ill-fated goat started on December 1, 1966 when a giant version of the traditional Swedish yule goat made out of straw, was placed on Slottstorget square. On December 31 that year the three-ton, 23-foot-tall goat went up in smoke. The perpetrator was arrested and charged with vandalism. Every year since then a yule goat has been placed on the square and, more often than not, it has been vandalized, most often set ablaze. Its survival is now on the British betting lists! In 2001, a 51-year-old tourist from the

USA started the fire that burned it down, after which he was arrested and fined SEK 100,000. Good news: the goat survived the 2002 Christmas season! In 2003 someone set fire to the yule goat on December 13, and it burned down. In 2004, the goat made it to December 21.

■ Tourist Information

Gävle Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), Drottninggatan 37801 35, Gävle, ☎ 026-147-430, fax 026-107-831, www.gavle.se.

Söderhamn & the Province of Hälsingland

Continue the journey some 70 km (55 miles) north of Gävle along the Bothnian Bay coast and you will reach **Söderhamn** in the province of Hälsingland. This province is known for its pretty coast, deep forests and blue mountains, and its large well-preserved farms from the 18th and 19th centuries. These ornately decorated farmhouses are called **Hälsingegårdar** and can be seen throughout the province. Many of them are open to the public during the summer months. Söderhamn was founded in 1620, when King Gustav II Adolph ordered blacksmiths from the entire province to relocate to the new town and go to work in the rifle factory. Today, it is an idyllic, sleepy little town set between two hills and blessed with a picturesque archipelago.

■ Tourist Information

Söderhamns Turism Resecentrum (Tourist Office), 826 40 Söderhamn, ☎ 0270-753-53, is located in the train station. Open all year, Mon-Fri 9 am-5:15 pm.

■ Getting Here

From Stockholm take E4 by car or frequent train services run from Stockholm. There are also many long-distance buses connecting with destinations primarily in northern Sweden.

■ Getting Around

Walking is the best way to get around town. Take a taxi boat, sightseeing boat, canoe or kayak to navigate around the archipelago.

■ Sightseeing

It is a very walkable city, where everything is within easy reach. There is an interesting mix of architectural styles, and, for a small town, a wealth of open spaces, parks and pretty gardens.

The very attractive pink **Ulrika Eleonora Kyrka** (church) was built in 1693 and is one of the few buildings from that time that is still standing. It was built by Nicodemus Tessin the younger, during the same period when he designed Stockholms Slott (the Royal Castle in Stockholm).

Rådhuset (the town hall) is another impressive building worth a look. It's in the eastern part of town. A pretty road and 125 steps up a steep hill will take you to the **Oscarsborg**, a lookout tower built in 1895. Like something out of a fairy tale, the tower is 23 meters (75 feet) high.

There are quite a few hiking trails around town, from easy walks to strenuous hikes. Resecentrum, above, will provide you with maps and information.

■ Where to Stay

First Hotel Statt, Oxtorgsgatan 17, 826 22 Söderhamn, ☎ 0270-735-70, fax 0270-135-24, www.firsthotels.se. It is the oldest hotel in town, built in 1880, and was recently totally renovated. First Hotel is the most upscale of all the hotels in town. The rooms are tastefully decorated and the public areas have lots of old-world charm. 78 rooms, $$.

Centralhotellet, Rådhustorget, 826 32 Söderhamn, ☎ 0270-700-00, www.centralhotellet.se. An old charming hotel in the heart of Söderhamn. Room sizes vary, but all are nicely furnished and have wooden floors. Great summer rates. 27 rooms, $.

For **Farm Stay and B&B** information, contact **Bo på Lantgård**, ☎ 0534-120-75, www.bopalantgard.org, or Resecentrum (see above).

■ Where to Eat

Around the central parts of town there are a variety of restaurants serving everything from Mexican tacos to Swedish traditional. A special mention goes to the archipelago restaurant, **Albertina**, ☎ 0270-320-10. Situated right on the water in the charming old fishing village of Skärsö, Albertina serves excellent fish and seafood. And best of all, you do not need to have a boat to get there. Just take E4 north from Söderhamn about three km (1.8 miles), then follow the Skärsö signs for about 10 km (6 miles). It is absolutely worth a detour.

■ Adventures

On Wheels

If traveling by car and if you would like to experience both beautiful countryside and fun adventures, make a detour from the coast by taking Road 301 from Söderhamn to **Voxna**. The drive goes through the beautiful Voxnadalen Valley and the villages of Alfta and Edsbyn. Voxna is a true outdoor paradise. There is canoeing in a variety of settings, secret roads to be explored on a bicycle. You can fish, hike and even do some mountain climbing. There are a couple of nice places to stay, one of which is **Voxnabruks Herrgård**, ☎ 0271-410-20, a beautiful castle-like manor. You can stay in the fabulous old manor itself or in modern apartments with kitchens nearby. The other option, the **STF Fiskevandrarhem** hostel, ☎ 0271-411-50, is on Voxna campground.

For all activities and equipment rental, contact **Voxnadalens Kanot & Camping**, ☎ 0271-411-50.

Voxna can also be reached by bus from Söderhamn. For additional information, contact **Edsbyn and Alfta Tourism**, ☎ 0271-556-61, or Söderhamns Resecentrum.

On Water

There are some 500 islands and islets in this archipelago. The largest of them is Storjungfrun (the great virgin), that also has lent is name to this coast – Jungfrukusten (the virgin coast). Many of the islands used to contain fishing villages. Today only one remains populated, **Skärsö**, where professional fishermen still live and work. Many of the islands are today instead dotted with pretty summer cottages and some recreational areas. The island of Skärsö is definitely worth a visit and so is the charming little fish restaurant Albertina.

On **Storjungfrun** island there is still a functioning lighthouse from the beginning of the 19th century and fascinating natural surroundings.

Boat Services

Söderhamns taxibåt (taxi boat), ☎ 010-269-6626.

M/S *Sandskär*, ☎ 02270-122-54, offers a three-hour boat trip. It operates from mid-May to mid-Sept.

Hudiksvall

Following Jungfrukusten (the virgin coast) north from Söderhamn you will run into Hudiksvall, another small coastal town and the second-oldest town in northern Sweden. This town, well over 400 years old, acquired the nickname of *Glada Hudik* (cheerful/lively Hudiksvall) in

the late 19th century. It was much talked about back then as a party town, at a time when the timber barons did their best to spend their newly acquired fortunes. The town is still trying to promote its image from those days, but do not expect a lively night scene, as there is not a lot going on.

Hudiksvalls Turistbyrå (Tourist Information), Moljen 824 80, Hudiksvall, ☎ 0650-191-00, fax 0650-381-75, www.hudiskvall.se.

■ Getting Here

Reach it via E4 60 km, 37 miles north of Söderhamn, or by train.

■ Sightseeing

Hudiksvall is another town that over the years was badly damaged by fires. The oldest part still standing is **Fiskarstan** (the fishermen's town) with houses from the mid-1800s built along narrow cobbled streets. **Hudiksvalls Kyrka** (its proper name is St. Jacobs church) is one of the old structures remaining. It is situated high above the town and has a great view of the harbor. St. Jacobs was rebuilt in 1715, and the Russians spared it in 1721 when they burned down almost the entire town.

Along Strömmingssundet (the herring sound) lies the small harbor area, called **Moljen**, lined with typical fishermen's cottages. Worth a visit is **Hälsinglands Museum** on Storgatan 31, which offers a good insight into the history of Hudiksvall and the region. Around town there is a network of some 150 km (93 miles) of excellent walking trails. Contact the tourist office for maps and directions.

■ Where to Stay

First Hotel Statt, Storgatan 36, 824 22 Hudiksvall. ☎ 0650-150-60, fax 0650-960-95, www.firsthotels.se. Built in 1876, this hotel has always been the pride of Hudiksvall. It was the place where the timber barons and their entourage made Hudiksvall earn its nickname. Today it is still the most luxurious place to stay in town. The individually decorated rooms all have hardwood floors. There are original chandeliers, ceilings and fireplaces in the public areas. 106 rooms, $$$.

Hotel Hudik, Norra Kyrkogatan 11, 824 30 Hudiksvall. ☎ 0650-541-000, www.hkchotels.se. A small hotel with personal service located in the center of town. Comfortable rooms with all amenities. Sauna, jacuzzi, parking and an outdoor pool. 53 rooms, $$.

Hudiksvalls STF Vandrarhem, Malnbaden, Hudiksvall. ☎ 0650-132-60. Open mid-May to mid-Sept. This is a hostel located three

km (two miles) from the city center at Malmbaden campsite. Beach and lots of outdoor activities. Limited bus service. 36 beds, $.

For **Farm Stay and B&B** information, contact **Bo på Lantgård**, ☎ 0534-120-75, www.bopalantgard.org, or **Hudiksvalls Turistbyrå** (Moljen 824 80, Hudiksvall, ☎ 0650-191-00, fax 0650-381-75, www.hudiskvall.se). For **cottage rental** in the archipelago, contact **Nordanstigs Bokningcentral**, ☎ 0652-161-75, www.bokningscentralen.com.

■ Where to Eat

As the city center is small, you will easily find a place to eat. One nice restaurant is **Gretas Krog**, ☎ 0650-966-00. A cozy restaurant situated on Västra Tvärkajen in the dock area, serving Swedish traditional dishes with an emphasis on fish. Another popular place is **Bruns**, ☎ 0650-104-02, on Brunnsgatan 2. The menu features varied international fare and also some great vegetarian dishes. Bruns has a large outdoor terrace and a pub that is also a nightclub.

■ Adventures

On Wheels

For inland adventures follow Hwy 84 from Hudiksvall to Delsbo, then turn off on 305 to **Dellensjöarna** (the Dellen Lakes). It is an area with lots of outdoor activities and a good place to look for authentic local arts and handicrafts. In **Delsbo** you can take a trolley ride on the tracks of an old railroad from 1880s. Contact **Dellenbanan**, ☎ 0653-164-60.

A few minutes north of Delsbo is **Bjuråker**, where you will find **Svågdalens Vildmarkscenter** (wilderness center), ☎ 0653-310-22, with a small hostel and some apartments with kitchens. They offer canoe rental, boat rental, fishing and all kinds of outdoor activities. Bjuråker can also be reached by bus from Hudiksvall. Travel time, with one change of bus, is about 2½ hours.

Bicycle Rental: In Hudiksvall, **Hudiksvalls Cykelaffär**, ☎ 0650-312-37. In Hornslandet, **Natura Camping**, ☎ 0650-565-032. In Dellensjöarna, **Bjuråker Cykel**, ☎ 0653-200-34.

On Water

In the northern part of the Hudiksvall archipelago is the peninsula of **Hornslandet**, a recreational area. Much of the land is protected and features interesting flora and fauna. It is an ideal area for boating, swimming and fishing, but also for hiking and cave explorations. Northern Europe's second-largest primary rock cave system, the **Hölickgrottorna**, can be visited here (contact Alf Siden,

☎ 0650-704-92). There are also **Kuggöarna** and **Hölick**, two fishermen's villages bustling with life during the summer months.

A bit farther north along the coast is **Mellanfjärden**, a charming little fishing village with a small 10-room hotel, the **Mellanfjärden Hotel**, ☎ 0650-16185, and **Restaurang Sjömärket**, ☎ 0650-161-15, a wonderful fish and seafood restaurant with indoor and outdoor seating.

M/S *Gran* is a charming old fishing trawler turned sightseeing boat that offers various archipelago tours. You can also enjoy an hour or a full day onboard ***Anitra***, a skippered sailing yacht. For more information or bookings, contact **Nordanstigs Bokningcentral**, ☎ 0652-161-75, www.bokningscentralen.com, or **Hudiksvalls Turisbyrå** (☎ 0650-191-00, fax 0650-381-75, www.hudiskvall.se).

Canoe & Kayak Rental: Friluftsfrämjandet in Hudiksvall rents kayaks and arranges tours. ☎ 0650-595-56. **Baptiskyrkans Ungdom** in Hudiksvall rents canoes. ☎ 0650-943-23.

Sundsvall & the Province of Medelpad

Leaving Hudiksvall, working your way north on E4 another 80 km (50 miles), the next major town is Sundsvall in the small Medelpad province. It was yet another coastal city ravaged by many fires. After "the great fire" in 1888 that left almost all the town's 10,000 inhabitants homeless, the city fathers decided that the new Sundsvall should be entirely built of stone. Within a few years after the fire and after a lot of political power struggles, a brand new stone city emerged, with gracious buildings made primarily of brick and limestone.

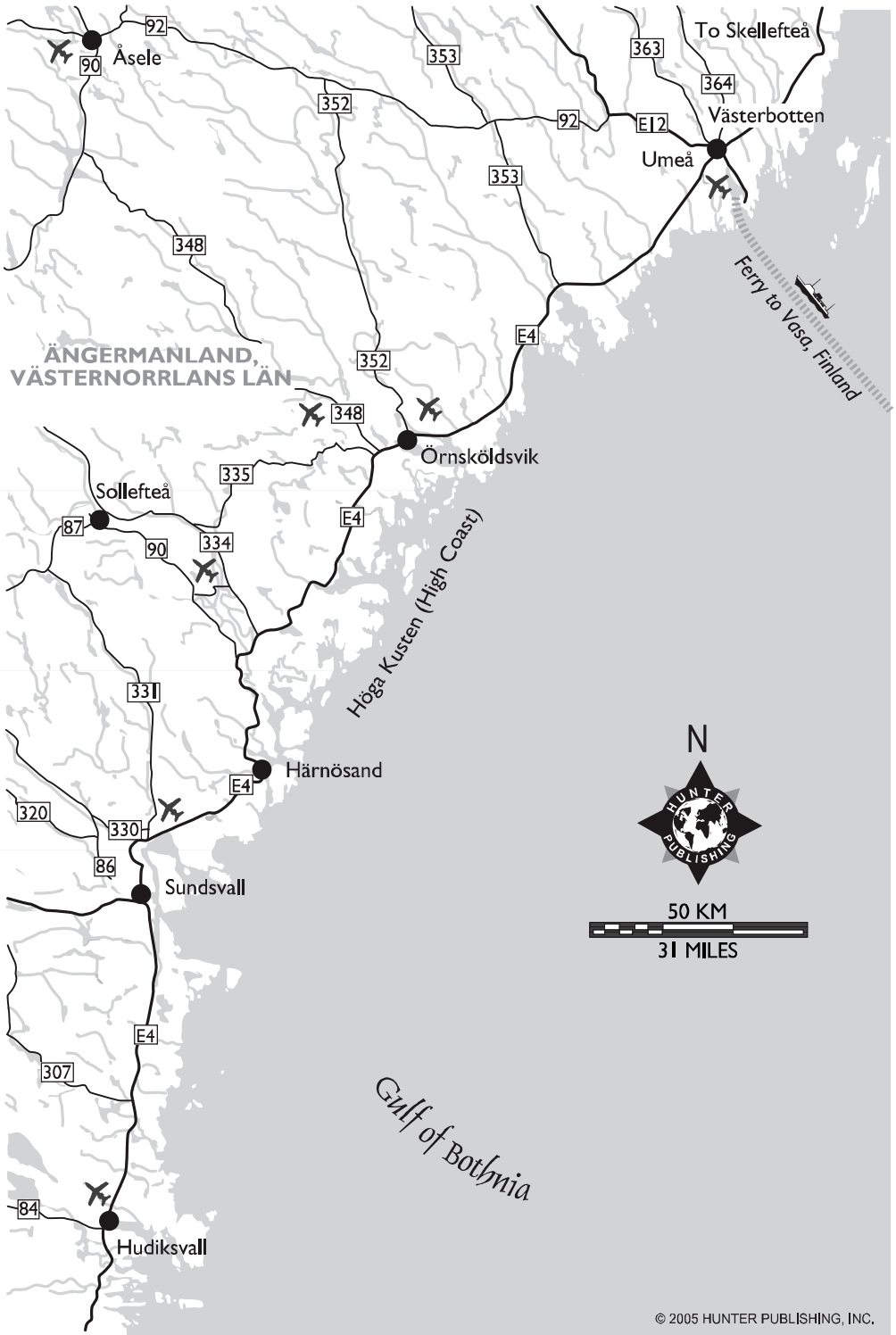
■ Tourist Information

For information, contact **Sundsvalls Turistbyrå** (Tourist Office), Stora torget 852030, Sundsvall, ☎ 060-610-450, fax 060-127-272, www.sundsvallturism.com.

■ How to Get Here

Take E4 by car or use the high-speed train X2000 from Stockholm. Distance from Stockholm to Sundsvall is 390 km (240 miles). There is also direct train service from the inland city of Östersund. For travel north of Sundsvall your best bet is the regional or long distance buses. The nearest airport is Midlanda, north of town. Airport bus service or taxi is available.

Hudiksvall to Umeå



■ How to Get Around

Sundsvall is a very walkable town. For the surrounding areas there are good bus services.

■ Sightseeing

A stroll in "Stenstan" (the stone city), as Sundsvall is nicknamed, is a true pleasure. Over 30 of the stately and ornate historic buildings are culturally protected and a walk in the center of town gives you a feeling of walking around in a miniature Stockholm or Gothenburg. Most of what might interest visitors, including shopping, is situated around Storgatan Street and Stortorget Square.

Gustav Adolfs Kyrka, built at the end of the 19th century, is a red brick church with a most unusual interior, looking as if it were made of children's building blocks. **Rådhuset** (the town hall) is a place where frequent exhibits and happenings take place.

Kulturmagasinet (the culture warehouse) is the name of the museum where you can follow the regional history from sixth-century chieftains to the timber barons of a much later era. Located down by the harbor, the museum also houses the city library and a café. Nearby is **Casino Cosmopol**, Sweden's first international casino. It is housed in a charming old train station building dating from 1874.

For longer walks and marvelous views, nature trails take wanderers up to **Norra Berget** (the northern mountain) or to **Södra Berget** (you guessed it, the southern mountain).

■ Where to Stay

Elite Hotel Knaust, Storgatan, 951 05 Sundsvall, ☎ 060-608-000, fax 060-608-0010, www.elite.se. This is one of the most beautiful buildings in Sundsvall. It was built as a hotel in 1890 and was one of the favorites of the old timber barons and later of many Sundsvall visitors until 1971, when work started on its conversion to offices and apartments. Elite hotels of Sweden took it over in 2001 and has worked to get it back to the original style. It re-opened as a first-class hotel in fall 2002. The ultra-modern rooms are decorated in classic style, with beautiful stucco work and high ceilings. The public areas are worth a visit even if you are not staying here. 94 rooms, $$$.

HOTEL PRICE CHART	
Based on two people in a standard double room, weekday rack rate	
$	Under US$75 (SEK 625)
$$	US$75-150 (SEK 625-1,250)
$$$	US$151-225 (SEK 1,250-1,880)
$$$$	Over US$225 (SEK 1,880)

Lilla Hotellet, Rådhusgatan 15, 852 31 Sundsvall, ☎ 060-613-587. A tiny family-owned and -operated hotel, Lilla occupies a historic building in the center of town and is definitely a good value for the money. Nine rooms, $.

Grand Hotel, Nybrogatan 13, 852 31 Sundsvall, ☎ 060-646-560, fax 060-646-565, www.grandhotelsundsvall.se. Situated in the heart of the city, 295 steps from Stora torget and the same distance from the Casino, this small hotel has individually decorated rooms, almost all newly renovated. The hotel has the best-equipped spa in town. Ask for spa packages. 50 rooms (and a few hotel apartments), $$.

Södra Bergets Vandrarhem (hostel), Regementsvägen 3-5, 852 38 Sundsvall, ☎ 060-155-510, www.sodrabergetsvandrarhem.se. The newest hostel in the area, it is at the foot of Södra Berget (the southern mountain) 1.5 km from the center of town. Clean and well-run, with kitchen, laundry room and vending machines. Many outdoor activities offered. 60 beds, $.

For **Farm Stay** and **B&B** information, contact **Bo på Lantgård,** ☎ 0534-120-75, www.bopalantgard.org or **Hudiksvalls Turistbyrå** (☎ 0650-191-00, fax 0650-381-75, www.hudiskvall.se).

■ Where to Eat

There are lots of restaurants and cafés in the center of town. One worth mentioning is **Skeppsbrokällaren**, Sjögatan 11, ☎ 060-150-720, a quiet and nicely decorated restaurant ensconced in a cellar, featuring Swedish cuisine. Out of the town center, there is **Restaurang Grankottenon** on Norra Berget, ☎ 060-614-222. The stunning scenery and the Swedish-French dishes are definitely worth the small detour.

DINING PRICE CHART	
Based on the price of a main course for dinner	
$	Under US$15 (SEK 125)
$$	US$15-30 (SEK 125-250)
$$$	US$31-45 (SEK 251-375)
$$$$	Over US$45 (SEK 375)

■ Adventures

On Wheels

Rent a bike to take a look at **Alnön**, an island that is part of Sundsvall and perfect for sightseeing on two wheels. Make the little fishing village **Spikarna** your goal. In summertime you can also get here by bus from the town center.

If you are in a rental car and would like to experience something off the beaten path, head out of town to **Aggegården**, a most unusual and fascinating sculpture park set in the middle of a forest some 70 km (42 miles)

northwest of Sundsvall. Artist Curt Agge is here featuring over 50 of his iron sculptures. For reservations (required) and directions, call the artist directly at ☎ 0691-400-69.

Another unusual place to visit is **Flataklocken,** the exact geographical center of Sweden and, just as in the country's southernmost point, Smygehult, and the northernmost point, Stenriksröset, you will get a certificate as proof of your visit. From Sundsvall, just follow E14 west for about 50 km (31 miles) until you see the signs for Flataklocken.

If you like shopping, head eight km north of Sundsvall and you will reach the small town of **Birsta** and one of the most visited attractions in northern Sweden, a huge shopping area with the Swedish furniture giant Ikea as the center point. A special shopping shuttle service by bus is available on weekends.

Härnösand & the Province of Ångermanland

Just where the Ångermanälven river flows into the Bothnian Sea some 40 km (25 miles) north of Sundsvall, lies the little charming town Härnösand. One part of this small town is on the island of Härnön and the other part on the mainland. The city center is divided by a small channel that links Norra and Södra Sundet (the northern and southern sounds). It is the entry to the province of Ångermanland, and the southern gateway city to Höga Kusten (the High Coast), the stunning coastal stretch that is one of the most beautiful areas in Sweden.

The history of Härnösand goes back a long way. In 1585 King Johan III decided that this should be a permanent trading center.

■ Tourist Information

Härnösand Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), Järnvägsgatan 2871 45, Härnösand, ☎ 0611-881-40, fax 0611-881-02, www.turism.harnosand.se.

■ Getting Here

By car, take E4. Or take the train from Stockholm to Sundsvall and from there to Härnösand by bus; total travel time is about 4½ hours. Nearest airport is Midlanda, 34 km (21 miles) south of town. Airport bus service is available or taxi.

■ Getting Around

The small city is easily explored on foot. To get to surrounding areas there is an extensive network of buses and boats.

■ Sightseeing

While exploring the city you get a feeling that this is a town with a long history as a center for regional administration, education and culture. The heart of the city is around Stora Torget square. Here you can admire the neo-classical **Rådhuset** building (the town hall) from 1791 and the very attractive **Domkyrkan**, the smallest cathedral in Sweden, and the only one colored white. It was consecrated in 1846 and stands on the same site as an earlier church that was burnt down in 1721 during one of the worst Russian coastal raids.

Östanbacken, locally called "Öbacka," is the oldest part of town, with some painted and well-preserved wooden houses from the 18th century. A bit out of the center of town is **Murberget,** where you will find **Vesternorrlands Länsmuseum** (the county museum), a rather new and very well-built museum where you can walk through the history of the region from prehistoric to modern times. Here, overlooking the town and the harbor is a also an impressive **Open Air Heritage Museum**. Only Skansen in Stockholm is larger. If you prefer not to walk to Murberget, there is a local bus service departing from Rådhuset.

Mötesplats Nattviken is a yacht harbor and a meetingplace in the center of town with a restaurant, frequent exhibits and beach volleyball.

■ Where to Stay

First Hotel Stadt, Skeppsbron 9, 871 30 Härnösand. ☎ 0611-554-440, fax 0611-544-447, www.firsthotels.com. The most upscale hotel in town, located right on the channel that runs through town. Close to shopping and transportation. Large rooms with wooden floors, most with a view of the harbor. 95 rooms. $$$.

Royal Hotell, Strandgatan 12, 871 45 Härnösand, ☎ 0611-204-55. Good location right between the bus and the railroad station. Recently renovated, individually decorated rooms. Great summer rates. Special prices for hotel guests in the restaurant. This small hotel is family-owned and -operated. 19 rooms. $$.

Palms Värdshus & Camping, Åvägen 2, 870 10 Ålandsbro, ☎ 0611-603 00, www.palmswardshus.com. This small inn, with cottages and campground, is right on the ocean and only eight km (five miles) north of Härnösand. The inn also features a popular restaurant. Four rooms at the inn and three cottages. $.

For **Farm Stay** and **B&B** information contact **Bo på Lantgård**, ☎ 0534-120-75, www.bopalantgard.org, or Härnösands Turistbyrå.

■ Where to Eat

The Highlander, Nybrogatan 5, is a very popular pub/restaurant with an Irish/Scottish feeling.

Restaurang Apothequet, Nybrogatan 3, set in a 100-year-old pharmacy building, serves excellent fish and meat dishes. The bar is very busy, especially on weekends, and has an impressive whisky list. For lighter fare visit **Rutiga Duken**, a homey café near the cathedral.

■ Adventures

Only five miles southeast of town is **Smitingen**, a nature reserve with long wonderful sandy beaches, some of the best in Northern Sweden. Nearby you will find fascinating pebble beaches, drift boulders and "tunnel caves." From late June to mid-Aug, **M/S *Ådalen III*** sails on the very picturesque Ångermanälven River between Härnösand and Sollefteå, ☎ 0612-505 41.

Also see Höga Kusten, below.

Höga Kusten (the High Coast)

To enter the magical and geologically unique Höga Kusten area from the south, cross Ångermanälven River just north of Härnösand on E4 over the elegant **Högakustenbron** (the high coast bridge). This is one of the longest suspension bridges in the world, built between 1994 and '97, and is just a tad shorter than its role model, the Golden Gate in San Francisco. The length is 1,800 m (5,905 feet) and the height 180 m (590 feet). On the northern side of the bridge, at Hornöberget, there is an excellent information facility as well as a hotel and restaurant, and this is a good place to start your exploration of this unusual area.

When the World Heritage Committee at UNESCO decided to include Höga Kusten in its prestigious list, which today includes 690 sites worldwide (of which 11 are located in Sweden), the main reason was because it has had the highest isotonic uplift in the world since the last Ice Age. When the ice began to melt some 20,000 years ago, the land started ever so slowly to rise. The epicenter of the mass of ice was then where Höga Kusten is today, and here the three-km (9,900-foot) layer of ice compressed the land down by 800 m (2,625 feet). When the massive sheet of ice finally melted about 9,600 years ago, the land had risen up again by some 500 m (1,640 feet) and the highest parts started to emerge above sea level. Since then, with the water working on the landscape, the uplift

has continued another 286 m (938 feet) and the rise is continuing at a rate of almost nine mm (0.35 inches) yearly.

The area encompasses 142,000 ha (350,000 acres), including a marine component of 80,000 ha (198,000 acres) and the offshore islands. Even experienced travelers will be moved by the beauty of the mighty forests, striking mountains and lush valleys, as well as the craggy shorelines with mountain walls dropping straight into the ocean. Some of the interesting natural highlights are the capped hills, the extensive rubble field and the many caves and crevices.

Off the coast are a few islands offering peaceful getaways. The sea has always been important for the the people living along the Bothnian coastline and, in 1557, Gävle fishermen were granted an exclusive right to fish the shores of northern Sweden, a privilege they kept for a long time. Many of the picturesque villages on the peninsulas and on the islands you see today were founded as stopover places for these fishermen.

■ Tourist Information

Härnösand Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), Järnvägsgatan 2871 45, Härnösand, ☎ 0611-881-40, fax 0611-881-02, www.turism.harnosand.se. **Örnsköldsviks Turistbyrå** (Tourist Office), Nygatan 18891 88, Örnsköldsvik, ☎ 0660-881 00, fax 0660-881-23, www.ornskoldsvik.se/turism, www.hogakusten.net.

■ Adventures

On Foot

Högakustenleden (the High Coast Trail) stretches along this amazing coast from Hornöberget on the northern side of the bridge to Varvsberget, just outside Örnsköldsvik. The entire length is 127 km (79 miles), divided into 13 sections of various lengths. Within each sectiion there is at least one overnight facility under roof, ranging from the most basic cabin to a hostel or a hotel. You can reach the starting and ending points of each section by car, but keep in mind that long-term parking is rare at these places. All windbreaks and overnight cabins are open to everybody; they can't be pre-booked, and no one has exclusive rights, which means you can't deny access to other hikers. The trail is well marked in orange on trees and poles, plus there is lots of signage with directions and distances. The best way to plan for your hike is to purchase a map and guidebook for SEK 80, which can be found at most tourist information offices in the region. Even if you are not up for the entire hike, you should walk at least a small part of it to get a true feeling for this unique and amazing landscape. Nowhere else in Europe will you find as many different kinds of rock in an area the same size as Höga Kusten. The most mineral is the Rapakivi red rock (also called Nordingrå

granite). The mountain and inland flora mix with seashore type vegetation. For bird-watchers it is a paradise, as over 280 species have been sighted here. There are moose, foxes, mountain hares, lynx and beavers, the animal symbol of the province of Ångermanland. They were almost extinct some years ago but are now thriving again.

High Coast Marathon, ☎ 613-202-40, fax 0613-200-6, www.hkmarathon.nu. One of the most scenic marathons in the world is held here annually during the second week of Aug.

On Horseback

A great way to experience parts of this heritage area is on horseback. Even-tempered Icelandic horses will take experienced riders as well as beginners on trips lasting from a few hours up to a fabulous and very affordable three-day ride. Contact **Hästgård Höga Kusten,** ☎ 0613-302-35, www.ridhogakusten.nu. The stables are 20 minutes from Härnösand or 40 minutes from Örnsköldsvik. The two-night/three-day ride costs SEK 2,900 for full board (food and accommodations).

On Wheels & on Foot

Another fabulous way to experience Höga Kusten is on a bicycle. Resklara, a local tour and travel company based in Härnösand, has a package (which can easily be modified) that includes a bike, four nights' accommodation and evening meals at small handpicked B&Bs, one night in a hostel with breakfast in Härnösand, plus a boat trip to Ulvö island. Contact **Resklara**, ☎ 0611-790-25, www.resklara.se. Price for the above package is SEK 6,400 per person. Bikes are to be picked up and dropped off in Härnösand.

Skuleberget and Skuleskogen are a couple of the most important and fascinating parts of Höga Kusten. **Skule Naturum**, Skuleberget, 870 33 Docksta, ☎ 0613-401 71, is an excellent information center for the entire High Coast. You will learn about the geology, flora and fauna of the area and you can get the complete lowdown on what to do, what not to do, what to see, hiking trails, etc. Open all year, daily June-August and off season Mon-Fri. If you forgot to bring the right outdoor gear, nearby you will find **Skule Friluftsbutiken**, a shop that sells everything you might need to enjoy the wild, and sometimes wet, outdoors.

Skuleberget is a fascinating mountain that has been a nature reserve since 1969, with a location on the edge of Skule Skogen National Park right by the ocean. Just off E4, it offers plenty of popular activities, with a cable car, climbing trails, adventure trails and camping. On the eastern side of the mountain is a much-visited round grotto. The cable car takes you up to the summit where there is a café/restaurant, **Skulebergets**

Toppstuga, with the most breathtaking views. There is also an Adventure Trail where you can test your will, skill and have some great fun. **Skuleskogen National Park** (NP since 1984) has 30 km (19 miles) of marked trails. The High Coast Trail goes through the eastern part of the park. Most of the trails in the hilly park are from moderate to strenuous. It's known for its rich bird and mammal life and, with bit of luck, you might spot the rare white-backed woodpecker, a Siberian jay, a giant moose or a shy blue hare. The most visited, and photographed, place in this national park is **Slåttdalsskrevan**, a ravine that is 200 m (659 feet) long, 40 m (131 feet) deep and seven m (30 feet) wide.

The southern entrance to the park is north of Docksta, about nine km (six miles) from E4; just follow the signs. The northern park entrance is off E4 in Näske; follow the signs about eight km (five miles).

Sandöbron, when it opened in 1943, at 1,024 m (3,360 feet), was the longest bridge in the world. This beautiful bridge, and old E4, crosses the Ångermanälven river a few km north of the new Högakustenbron Bridge.

■ Where to Stay

Hotel Höga Kusten, Hornöberget, ☎ 0613-722-270, fax 0613-722-279, www.hotellhogakusten.se. A small hotel on the northern side of the bridge. Modern, comfortable twin-bed rooms. Restaurant with an unbeatable view, good food and generous portions. Sauna. 30 rooms, $$.

Frånö Hotel, Riksvägen 25, 872 43 Kramfors, ☎ 0612-305-20, fax 0612-305 85. Between Sandöbron Bridge and the town of Kramfors, this charming hotel and restaurant has a beautiful garden by the Ångermanälven river. Nicely decorated, comfortable rooms, all smoke-free. The hotel is also home to **Keramikens Hus**, open daily from June to mid-August, with the largest display of ceramics in Sweden. 14 rooms, $$.

Lappudden, ☎ 0613-203-50. A charming holiday village with cottage rentals, surrounded by water, mountains and valleys. This is one of the recommended end sections on the High Coast Trail. Canoe, rowboat and bicycle rental. Access to a private island. Eight cottages and two apartments with kitchens, plus a building with very basic accommodation for overnighters. Open from early April to mid-October.

A very special place to stay is **Salsåker Herrgård** (High Coast Manor Inn), Salsåker, 870 30 Nordingrå, ☎ 0613-121-00, fax 0613-120-11, www.manorinn.se. A manor house built in the 18th century as the home and offices for a timber baron, this gem in a fairy-tale setting on its own island was restored in 1995 and then turned into a wonderfully charming little hotel. It is a perfect base for exploring Höga Kusten. From E4 turn

off at Ullånger and exit toward Nordingrå and follow Salsåker/High Coast Manor Inn signs. 12 rooms, $$.

■ Where to Eat

On the Mjällom Peninsula, **Mjällom Hotel**, Hotellgatan 3, Mjällom, ☎ 0613-210-90, www.mjallomshotell.com, is a cozy old hotel with individually decorated rooms and a restaurant with home cooking. 19 rooms (10 in main building and nine in annex), $.

Award-winning **Norrfällsviken Camping**, ☎ 0613-210-07, is set on a forested hill above the marina and with a view over the water. There are 37 cottages with shower, toilet, kitchen and TV. Sauna, pool and restaurant on the premises. $.

Norrfällsviken Fritid & Konferens, ☎ 0613-212-55, fax 0613-214-32, is a resort with a hostel, cottages, pool and **Brittas Restaurant**, where you can eat in or take out. $.

Fiskarfänget Restaurant and fish store, ☎ 0613-211-17, is in an old boathouse on the water and serves a great seafood buffet.

■ Exploring the Peninsula & the Islands

The **Nordingrå Peninsula** is the heart of Höga Kusten, where the bedrock is the attractive red rapkivi granite, also called Nordingrä granite. Here you will find a wonderful and richly varied archipelago, picturesque fishing villages, dramatic cliffs and indescribable views. Visit Mannaminne in Häggvik, ☎ 0613-202-90, a unique village created by artist Anders Åberg and his wife Barbro. It is part museum, part art gallery, part restaurant, part high-tech and part history – this place just has to be experienced. It's a work in progress that has been underway for over 20 years. They also have rooms and cottages for rent. A yearly jazz festival takes places at the end of July and there are frequent music evenings throughout the summer.

Bönhamn, on the westernmost part of the peninsula, is a charming little fishing village where new and old culture blends. A small fishing chapel from the 18th century and some great walking trails add to its appeal. **Arnes Sjöbod**, ☎ 0613-231-44, is a wonderful little restaurant in an old boathouse with a terrace for outdoor dining. Arnes also offers accommodations.

The peaceful and barren island of **Högbonden** is one of the most photographed places on the High Coast. During high season it is very popular with day-trippers. This is where you also find one of the most unusual hostels in Sweden. On the edge of the steep sea cliff, next to the old lighthouse, is the old house of the lighthouse keepers. Today it has been turned into a youth hostel. A café/restaurant is open from mid-June to

mid-Aug. Part of the attraction is also the fact that it not easy to get here. The island is only accessible by boat from Bönhamn and Barsta. **Högbondens Café & Vandrarhem** (hostel), ☎ 0613-230-05 (off-season ☎ 0613-420-49), fax 0613-421-19. Some rooms have a sea view. Shared showers in main building. The WC is an outhouse. Wood-fired sauna down by the water. 32 beds, $.

Barsta, left, a fishing village dating back to the 15th century, is home to one of the best-preserved fishermen's chapels in this area and also home to **Restaurang Skutskepparen**, ☎ 0613-230-90, one of the best fish restaurants on Höga Kusten. They also have rooms for rent. ☎ 0613-230-50.

On the tip of the Mjällom Peninsula is the old fishing village of **Norrfällsviken**, founded by Gävle fishermen back in the mid-1500s. It stayed a small quiet fishing village until recently, but today the sheltered marina has over 50 guest berths, making it one of the biggest in the north of Sweden. There is excellent camping as well as some good eating places. **Storsands Nature Reserve** offers sandy beaches, sand dunes and shallow waters. The western part of this reserve is for nudists. There are also some impressive rubble stone fields. Not too far from there is an 18-hole forest-and-seaside golf course, the **Norrfällsvikens Golfklubb**, ☎ 0613-210-85. Just do not let the terrific views of the High Coast and the grazing reindeers distract you. Open from April until the snow arrives.

Back on E4 heading north, you can't miss the enormous golden coathanger in **Ullånger**, showing the way to a clothing warehouse. From Ullånger the M/S *Kustrafik* runs a daily service during the summer months to Ulvön via Docksta and the Mjällom Peninsula. The famous Mjällom *tunnbröd* is made here and you can stop at the bakery and buy it fresh out of the ovens. Tunnbröd is one of the bread staples in northern Sweden, a thin white unleavened bread (not unlike the Jewish matzo).

A bit farther north on E4 is **Docksta**, famous for its "slippers." These are a kind of slip-on shoe, not very attractive, but over the years they have become very popular in Sweden. You can stop by the factory and buy a pair or two. If shoes are not your preference, you can find some very unusual art nearby, at **Ateljé Ulltavlor**, ☎ 0613-402-47 (call in advance). Artist Kerstin Söderlund sells her pictures made out of hand-dyed wool. For reasonably priced accommodations, there is

Docksta Vandrarhem (hostel) and Camping, Skoved, Docksta, ☎ 0613-130-64, open all year; 30 beds. **Gammelstuga**, a great little restaurant and café nearby, serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. Reservations necessary off-season. Note that there is a very lively and loud barn dance going on during weekend evenings from June to August in **Kustladan** (the coast barn) next to the hostel.

Café Sjösidan, a small restaurant and pub at Docksta harbor, offers a very picturesque setting.

Ulvön

Ulvön

The tiny island of **Mjaltön**, between Skuleskogen and Ulvön, is the highest island in Sweden, 236 m (774 feet) above sea level. Part of it is a nature reserve. From the sheltered bay, Baggviken, there is a trail leading to the top of the island, with a most enchanting view. The island also houses a large grotto that's fun to explore.

Ulvön is actually two islands divided by a narrow sound. Whenever Ulvön is referred to it is usually the northern island, which is the bigger of the two and the only populated one. Known as "Bottenvikens Pärla" (the pearl of the Gulf of Bothnia), it is easily explored by foot on well-marked trails or by bicycle. **Ulvöhamn**, the main village, was founded by fishermen from Gävle over 400 years ago and was, up until the 1950s, the largest and best-known fishing village on the Bothnian Coast. Today only a handful of professional fishermen remain. The only street is lined with fishermen's cottages and boathouses. **Ulvö Kapell** is also here, the oldest of the chapels that remains in its original condition, dating back to 1622. Note the beautiful ceiling and wall paintings (right). On the northern side of the island is **Sandviken**, another old fishing village in a quiet setting. You can see that the buildings have moved away from their original water locations. This is caused by the isotonic uplift. There is also a nature reserve encompassing four moors, with some unusual vegetation. Daily boat connection from

Örnsköldsvik to Ulvön during the summer season. You can rent a bike from the little tourist office on the island in summer as well. Mention Ulvön to almost any Swede and they will tell you about Surströmming, which is the unofficial birthplace of fermented herring. See page 25.

Where to Stay on Ulvön

Ulvö Skärgårdshotell, in Ulvöhamn, ☎ 0660-224-009, fax 0660-224-078, www.ulvohotell, is a charming small hotel, built in 1905, with basic accommodations. Shared showers and WC. Most rooms have sea views. An excellent restaurant serves a daily seafood buffet. Don't miss the local dessert, Klappgröt. Swimming pool, sauna and mini-golf. Restaurant and pub. 21 rooms, $.

Sandvikens Stugby, in Sandviken, ☎ 0660-752-23. In this 300-year-old fishing village 15 of the old fishermen's cottages and seven boathouses have been restored, and can be rented by the night or by the week. There is a service center with shower, toilet, sauna and TV. Bicycle rental. $.

Ulvö Vandrarhem (hostel), Sörbyn, ☎ 0660-224-190, is in the center of the island, two km (1.2 miles) from Ulvöhamn. 30 beds, $.

Trysunda

The island of Trysunda is a personal favorite. Its little fishing village also called Trysunda is one of the best-preserved ones on the coast, with a very pretty lagoon-like sheltered bay. Its waterline is dotted with little red-and-white cottages. This island and its neighboring islands have a most interesting volcanic history. A walk along the beaches will give you some great photo opportunities. The beaches display an amazing array of colors with all shades of red, dotted with gray and black perfectly round stones. From the harbor, a network of trails leads to beaches and lookout points. During the season the island is accessible by boat from Ullånger, Köpmanholmen and Örnsköldsvik. No cars are allowed on the island.

Where to Stay on Trysunda

Trysunda Vandrarhem (hostel), ☎ 0660-430-38, open mid-May to mid-Sept. A small hostel with very basic rooms, located in the guest harbor. Shared kitchen. 25 beds. $.

Nisses Fisk & Logi, ☎ 0660-430-11. Buy fish here or rent a cozy little cabin. $.

> **TIP: Båtluffar Kortet** is a discount card that allows four one-way trips on any of the passenger boats sailing the Höga Kusten waters plus three one-way trips on the Länstrafiken buses. Valid from mid-June to mid-August, the cost is SEK 250 per adult. It can be purchased at most tourist information offices in the Medelpad and Ångermanland provinces.

Archipelago Boat Services

M/F *Ulvön* departs from Köpmanholmen to Ulvön and Trysunda. ☎ 0660-299-021 (all year). **M/S *Ottila II*** departs from Örnsköldsvik inner harbor to Ulvön, Trysunda and Sandviken, ☎ 0660-223-431 (operates during summer season only). **M/S *Kusttrafik*** departs from Ullånger to Ulvön via Docksta and Mjällom, ☎ 0613-105-50 (operates during summer season only). **M/S *Turbåten*** runs from Barsta to Bönhamn and Högbonden, ☎ 0613-420-49.

Kayak & Canoe Rental

Expedition Saga, Kanalvägen 1, 870 52 Nyland, ☎ 070-344-3359, rents sea kayaks. Day rental SEK 250; weekly rental SEK 2000; weekends SEK 700.

Russel Kayak & Teambuilding, Rosenbäcksallén 33, 871 61 Härnosand, ☎ 0611-20536, rents kayaks and outdoor gear. Guided tours.

Själevads Kanot och Friluftscentral Brogatan 100, 894 35 Själevad, ☎ 0660-293-320, rents canoes, kayaks and rowboats. Six km south of Örnsköldvik.

Sailboat Rental

Per Erik Näslund, Örnsköldsvik Segelsällskap, Box 208, 891 25 Örnsköldsvik, ☎ 0660 378-139. Rents sailboats. SEK 400 per day rental, SEK 2,500 for weekly rental.

Örnsköldsvik & Ångermanland Province

The northern gateway to Höga Kusten is Örnsköldsvik, locally known simply as Ö-vik. It is about 110 km (66 miles) north of Härnösand and is more than twice as big. In this young city with a very old history there are a few interesting places to visit but most visitors prefer overnighting in Härnösand or in some of the charming small villages on Höga Kusten.

■ Tourist Information

Örnsköldsviks Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), Nygatan 18891 88, Örnsköldsvik, ☎ 0660-881-00, fax 0660-881-23, www.ornskoldsvik.se/turism.

■ Getting Here

By car, take the E4. Or take the train from Stockholm to Sundsvall and from there the bus to Örnsköldsvik – total travel time about six hours.

■ Sightseeing

The walkable city center is filled with a variety of shops, department stores and eating places. One of the prettiest buildings in town is **Rådhuset** (town house) dating from 1909, where art and craft exhibits are often held. **Örnsköldsviks Museum** features permanent and special exhibitions and is also home to the summer workshop of a local artist-sculptor, Bror Marklund. It was moved here from Funäsdalen after his death in 1977. Another local artist, world-famous sculptor **Hans Hedberg**, has his own museum on Strandgatan. Here you can see some of his amazing giant fruit sculptures. He was born here in 1917, but has for over 40 years lived and worked in Biot, on the French Riviera.

For a fantastic view of Örnsköldsvik, take a leisurely hike up to the top of Varvsberget mountain, the last stop on the Högakustenleden (the high coast trail).

■ Where to Stay

Hotell Focus, Lasarettsgatan 9, 891 33 Örnsköldsvik, ☎ 0060-821-00, fax 0060-838-67, www.hotell-focus.se. You will not be charmed by the very plain hotel exterior, but this centrally located medium-size hotel offers good value, with basic but comfortable rooms. 44 rooms, $$.

For **Farm Stay** and **B&B** information contact **Bo på Lantgård**, ☎ 0534-120-75, www.bopalantgard.org, or **Örnsköldsviks Turistbyrå** (see above).

■ Where to Eat

For a good Swedish lunch, **Britta II**, Storgatan 3, is one of the best there is in town. **Fina Fisken** by the inner harbor (open June-Aug) serves excellent fish and seafood. And if you miss a real American hamburger and some good old country music, there is the Swedish-owned and -operated **Church Street Saloon** on Järnvägsgatan 5.

■ In & Around Örnsköldsvik

About five km (three miles) south of Örnsköldsvik (just follow the signs off of E4) is **Gene Fornby**. It is a reconstruction of an Iron Age farmstead dating back to the sixth century. Open daily during summer. Guided tours offered.

Vändaåtberget is a nature reserve, almost untouched by humans, 300 ha (741 acres) of 300-year-old primal forest. A marked hiking trail takes visitors through the reserve. This is also a paradise for insect lovers, with

over 394 varieties so far registered. Follow Road 352 north from Örnsköldsvik, then follow signs until just before you reach Studsviken. Also see Höga Kusten, page 93.

Umeå & the Province of Västerbotten

With 106,000 permanent residents and over 25,000 university students, **Umeå** is the largest city in North Sweden. In and around the city there is a great variety of things to see and to do – from a pub crawl to whitewater rafting and from beach combing to visiting a historic battlefield. The city was founded in 1622 and was the center of fighting between Sweden and Russia in 1808-1809. In the1830s shipping, trade and shipbuilding made it a rather prosperous city and many timber barons moved here. Like many of the other cities along the coast, Umeå has been plaged by fires. After the last major fire in 1888, the city was rebuilt and birch trees were planted along the wide new streets. Even today, thousands of birches are beautifying the city center.

■ Tourist Information

Umeå Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), Renmarkstorget 15, Umeå, ☎ 090-161-616, www.visitumea.se. Open all year; mid-June to mid-Aug, Mon-Fri, 8 am-7 pm; Sat-Sun, noon-4 pm; off-season, Mon-Fri, 10 am-5 pm.

■ Getting Here

It lies 700 km (554 miles) north of Stockholm, and can be reached by car or a combination of trains and buses. Everybody here is waiting for a new rail link under construction to be finished. It will start just north of Kramfors and will end in Umeå. This massive project, involving new and old tracks, 140 bridges and 250 km (155 miles) of tunnels, is scheduled to start operating in 2008.

■ Sightseeing

The city is bigger than Örnsköldsvik, but definitely more charming and it is easily explored on foot. The fast-flowing Umeälven river runs through the city, but most of what is of interest for visitors is on the northern side of the river. Most of the hotels are located around Rådhustorget square and so are the shops, restaurants and bars. After a stroll around the city center, head to **Gammlia**, about a 20-minute walk from the city center, which houses a number of museums.

As in most Swedish cities and towns, there is an open-air heritage museum, though this one is a bit older than most. It is only open during the summer months. The indoor **Västerbottens Museum** is open all year and you can walk through history from prehistoric through pioneer times. Part of it is also a **Fishing and Maritime Museum**, not to mention the **Swedish Ski Museum** and the **Bildmuseet** (modern art museum), featuring contemporary Swedish works as well as international collections.

If you need to revitalize yourself, visit **IKSU Club & Kultur Spa**, ☎ 090-712-460, a modern spa just outside the city center. The newly renovated old building is filled with art and surrounded by a soothing sculpture park. Open seven days a week.

For a beautiful nature hike along a boulder ridge, follow the **Tavelsjö Trail,** a 30-km (19-mile) trail that starts from the former military base in central Umeå to Tavelsjöberget mountain, 284 m (830 feet) above sea level. **Umeleden** is another hiking and biking trail that runs along the Umeälven river, starting in the center of town.

■ Where to Stay

First Stora Hotellet, Storgatan 46, 903 26 Umeå, ☎ 090-778-870, fax 090-133-055, www.firsthotels.se. A historic, first class hotel in the center of Umeå, built in 1894. Individually decorated rooms. Sauna. 94 rooms, $$.

Royal Hotel, Skolgatan 62, Vasaplan, 90329 Umeå, ☎ 090-100-730, fax 090-100-739, www.royalhotelumea.com, is Umeå's newest hotel, centrally located. Tastefully decorated rooms with all amenities. Sauna, Jacuzzi and solarium. The hotel has its own little movie theater, with free admittance for hotel guests. 68 rooms, $$.

Hotell Dragonen, Västra Norrlandsgatan 5, 90327 Umeå, ☎ 090-125-800, fax 090-141-075, www.hotelldragonen.se. Centrally located close to rail and bus stations. Roof-top pool, restaurant and pub during the summer months. Basic but comfortable rooms. 70 rooms, $.

STF Vandrarhem (hostel), Västra Esplanaden 10, 90328 Umeå, ☎ 090-771-650, fax 090-771-695. Clean and well-run hostel with a central location. Shared kitchen. $.

For **Farm Stay** and **B&B** information contact **Bo på Lantgård**, ☎ 0534-120-75, www.bopalantgard.org, or **Umeå Turistbyrå** (see above).

■ Where to Eat

Restaurang Ackjan, Strömpilsplatsen 38, ☎ 090-701-415, Sami-owned and -operated (see page 19), serving northern specialties with lots of reindeer and mountain fish on the menu.

Greta's, set in Royal Hotel on Skolgatan 62, ☎ 090-100-730, is one of the best restaurants in northern Sweden, serving perfectly prepared regional specialties from all over northern Sweden.

Il Fratello, Nygatan 22, ☎ 090-129-551. Italian décor and Italian food, but with some northern Swedish specialities mixed in.

Sjöbris, Kajen 10, ☎ 090-777-123. This old icebreaker from 1915 turned restaurant in 1999 is now permanently moored. Fresh and excellently prepared fish dishes and more.

■ Exploring the Area

Ratan Battlefield, about 10 km (six miles) north of Umeå, is a grim reminder of the Swedish-Russian War of 1808-1809. You can visit the old war graves and see bullet holes in the buildings. Today, Ratan is a quaint little village with a marina. The town's **Culture Center Ratan**, ☎ 0934-31-32, among other things, offers an excellent multimedia show. In 1809 Ratan was the center for important military operations and is where Sweden finally lost Finland to Russia after having ruled her neighbor on the other side of the Bay of Bottnia for over 800 years.

Holmön island is north of Umeå and 10 km (six miles) off the coast in the narrowest part of the Bothnian Bay. People have lived here permanently since the 14th century. In the first half of the 20th century up to 453 people lived here, fishing, hunting and farming. Today the old island way has largely been replaced by tourism and the permanent population is only about 90. The island has also been known for boat building, so now you can visit a boat museum. There have always been close ties between Holmön and its Finnish neighbor, the island of Björkö. Goods, people and mail have been transported between the two islands for many years. Today one of the most popular annual summer events is **Postrodden** (the mail-rowing race) where contestants row and sail between the two islands, commemorating the old mail run. In even years the starting point for this event is Holmön; in odd years it is Björkö. Two additional great summer events are the **Jazz Festival** and the **Song Festival**.

A nice day-tour is the barge trip from Holmön to **Stora Fjäderägg** island for bird-watching. The island has a lighthouse and hostel. The free barge ride takes about 45 minutes. To get to Holmön, take the free ferry that departs daily from Norrfjärden. The **Boat Museum**, ☎ 090-552-20, is also the tourist information office, and they will be happy to help you with

cabin & cottage rental on Holmön, hostel reservations on Fjäderägg, bicycle rental and barge and ferry information. There are also a couple of restaurants on the island, **Holmö Havsbad** and **Hamnkrogen**. But perhaps most important for islanders and visitors alike is **Stora Lanthandeln**, a country store which is a combination of grocery store, bank, post office, pharmacy and *Systembolagsombud* (the last long word meaning that you can order wine, beer and spirits from this officially appointed store.)

Norrbyskär is a car-free group of islands, 40 km (24 miles) south of Umeå. During the 1890s a large sawmill was built here, with a model society that took extremely good care of the workers with high salaries, free housing, free firewood and free health care. During the boom time in the 1920s over 1,400 permanent residents lived here. But the model society did not last. By 1952 the sawmill era ended, people moved away and Norrskär changed back to a sleepy groups of islands. Today it is a perfect place to get away from it all. In the eastern part of the islands, KFUM, the Swedish YMCA, has a camp with adventure trails, canoeing, sailing and basic accommodations. Contact **Norrbyskärs Activity Center**, ☎ 090-123-700. A ferry departs from Norrbyskär several times a day during spring, summer and fall.

■ Whitewater Rafting

There is some fantastic whitewater rafting in the province, one of the best organized places being **Vindeln**, 55 km (33 miles) northwest of Umeå on Route 363, ☎ 0933-202-73, www.forsranning.com. Another is **Aurora Borealis Adventures**, 95 km (60 miles) northwest of Umeå on Route 363, Ekorrsele 35, S-922 91 Vindeln, Västerbotten, ☎ 0933 630 15, www.auroraborealis.nu.

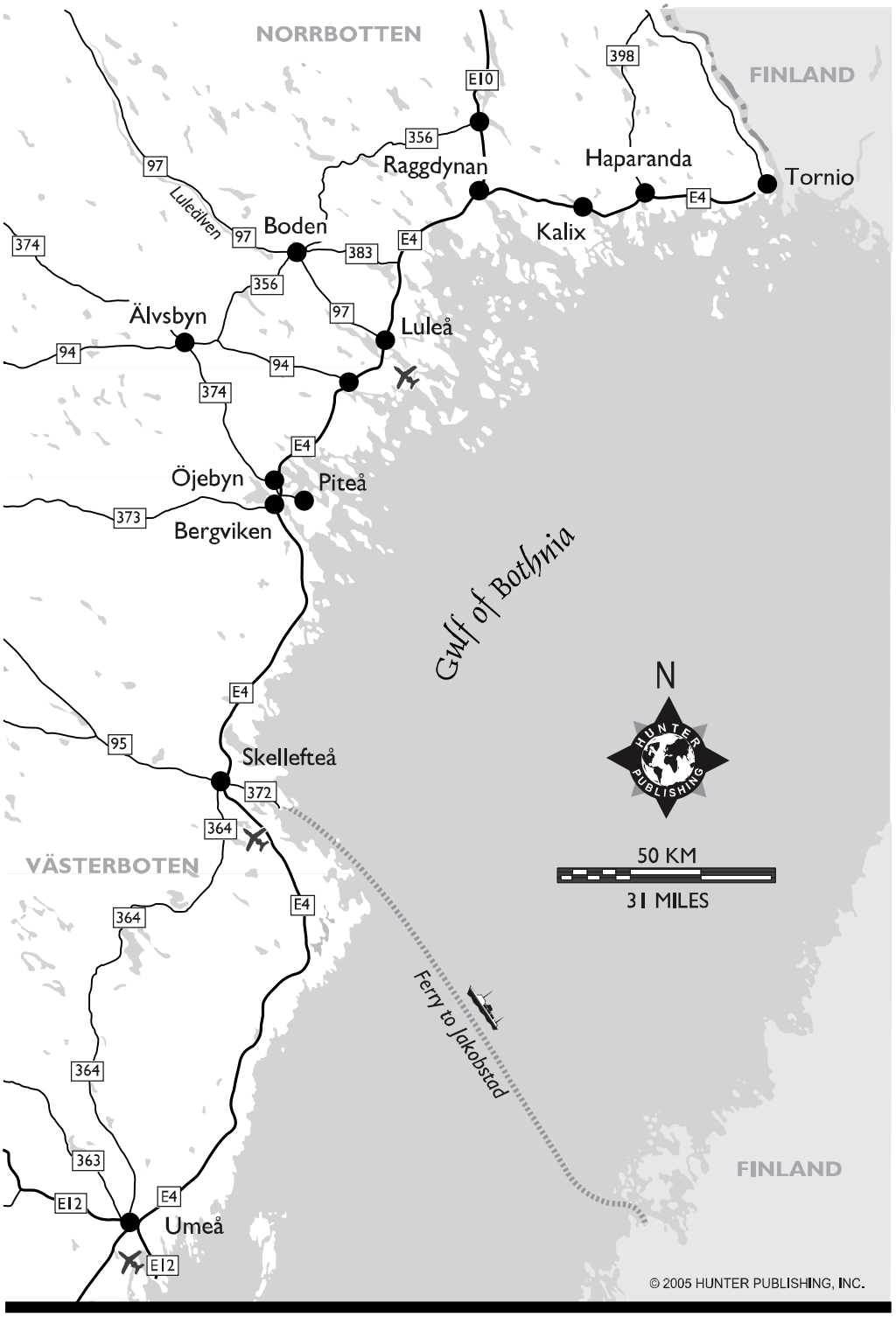
Skellefteå

For hundreds of years Skellefteå was a devout Christian community and a reminder from that time is **Skellefteå Kyrkstad** (church town), which has been preserved and is now culturally protected. Today Skellefteå and the surrounding region are known for summer music festivals and, most of all, for *Västerbottensost*. a very special kind of cheese made in nearby Burträsk.

■ Tourist Information

Skellefteå Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), Trädgårdsgatan 7 931 85, Skellefteå, ☎ 0910-736-020, fax 0910-736-018.

Skellefteå to Haparanda



■ Getting Here

Taking E4 by car or bus, it's 140 km (87 miles) north of Umeå.

■ Sightseeing

Take a stroll through **Stadsparken** (the city park) next to Rådhuset (the Town Hall) with an array of pretty flowers, but best know for its cactus garden! **Lejonströmsbron** bridge, built in 1737 this is the longest and oldest wooden bridge still in use in Sweden. **Rovön** island near the bridge offers lovely countryside strolls along the Skelllefteå river. In the outskirts of town stands **Skellefteå Landskyrka**, a large, striking domed church with a history dating back to the Middle Ages. It is surrounded by **Skellefteå Kyrkstad** (church town), locally called **Bonnstan** (farmers' town), with some 116 timber houses, some dating back over 150 years. There used to be about 70 of these kinds of towns in Sweden, all but one located in Norrland (north Sweden). Today only 16 have been preserved. These towns were built specifically to accommodate churchgoers who had to travel from afar to reach their parish church.

■ Where to Stay

First Hotell Statt, Stationsgatan 8, 931 21 Skellefteå, ☎ 0910-141-40, fax 0910-711-065, www. firsthotels.com, one block from Torget (the town square). Rooms are decorated in warm colors. There is a restaurant, bar, sauna, solarium and a small gym. Many rooms have park and river views. 90 rooms, $$.

Hotel Victoria, Trädgårdsgatan 8, sixth floor, 931 31 Skellefteå, ☎ 0910-174-70, fax 0910-894-58, www.hotelvictoria.se. This little hotel is on the top floor of a building right on the main square. Warm and homey feeling. All rooms have great views of the city. 18 rooms, $.

STF Vandrarhem (hostel), Brännanvägen 25, Skellefteå, ☎ 0910-725-700, fax 0910-568-63. A hostel housed in a former parish vicarage, in an idyllic oasis set right on the river, surrounded by lush vegetation. Basic accommodations with shared showers and WC. 24 beds, $.

For **Farm Stay and B&B** information contact **Bo på Lantgård**, ☎ 0534-120-75, www.bopalantgard.org or **Skellefteå Turistbyrå** (see above).

■ Exploring the Area

Ostens Hus (the cheese house), Kamvägen 12 in Burträsk, ☎ 0914-105-30, is 40 km (25 miles) south of Skellefteå and is an entire building dedicated to cheese – a new attraction inaugu-

rated by the Swedish royal family in 2003. The star here is the world-famous Västerbottensost (a special cheese made in, and named after, the province of Västerbotten). Here you will be able to experience an interactive history of cheese, enjoy a cheese tasting, and even make your own cheese.

The **Byske River** runs through Byske Laxdal (salmon valley), ☎ 0912-610-22, and is by many considered one of the best salmon rivers in the country. In the Byske and Åby river valleys you can fish and experience untouched wilderness, join guided adventure and fishing trips and observe the fish working their way up the rapids. A great place to stay is the **Byske Havsbad & Camping,** ☎ 0912-201-57, a five-star camping facility with 72 well-equipped cottages, a restaurant serving regional specialties, pub, pizzeria, bicycle rental, mini-golf, heated pool, a sandy beach and all kinds of beach games. Great fishing within walking distance.

Piteå & the Province of Norrbotten

Crossing over to the province of Norrbotten, Piteå will be the first town you reach. Located right where the Piteälven river meets the Bothnian Bay, the town itself does not have much of interest for visitors. Piteå is famous for two things. One is **Pite Havsbad** (a seaside resort) on a part of the coast known as Norrlands Riviera (the Northern Riviera). The other is ***pitepalt***, a regional culinary specialty made of flour (barley and wheat, sometimes boiled potatoes are added), water and salted pork and pork drippings made into fist-size balls and boiled in water.

■ Tourist Information

Contact the Tourist Office, located in the bus station building: **Piteå Turistbyrå**, Olof Palmes gata 2941 31, Piteå, ☎ 0911-933-90, fax 0911-733-10.

■ Getting Here

By car or bus, take E4 89 km (55 miles) north of Skellefteå.

■ Getting Around

Bus #1 basically takes you everywhere you need to go, Pite Havsbad, Öjebyn and Furunäset.

■ Where to Stay

Pite Havsbad Hotell & Konferens, Pitsundsvägen, 941 28 Piteå, ☎ 0911-327-00, fax 0911-327-98, www.pite-havsbad.se. A full-service resort, open all year and reasonably priced. 363 rooms, 28 mini-suites, three luxury suites, 98 bungalows, 99 cottages in four categories and a campsite with hook-up facilities for 1,100 RV's. There are also apartments with kitchens adjacent to the resort's main hotel building.

For **Farm Stay and B&B** information contact **Bo på Lantgård**, ☎ 0534-120-75, www.bopalantgard.org, or **Piteå Turistbyrå** (see above).

Five km (three miles) north of Piteå is historic **Öjeby Kyrkstad** (parish village), where the parishioners came to`worship. The church dates back to the15th century and the parish village that grew up around it became not only one of the first but also one the largest in Sweden. This was the location of Piteå when it received its town privileges in 1621. A few decades later it was moved to its present location. Be sure to arrive hungry in time for lunch or for an early dinner. A stop at **Restaurant Paltzerian** in Öjebyn is a must. They specialize in the regional "palt" offering 21 versions of this northern oddity, from the traditional pitepalt to a vegetarian version.

■ Exploring the Area

Pite Havsbad is 10 km (six miles) south of Piteå on "Norrlands Riviera," and, though close to the Arctic circle, it boasts more hours of sunshine and warmer summer temperatures than most of Scandinavia. The history of this resort started with a tiny beach kiosk and some very basic cottages in 1943. The first official nudist beach in Europe was inaugurated here in the early 1960s. Today Pite Havsbad is lively and crowded at the height of summer. The big draw is an excellent, one-km/.6-mile sandy beach and shallow waters. In addition to the swimming beach, there is a pool and an array of activities and entertainment such as an adventure center called AKVA, go-carts, mini-golf, sauna, spa and relaxation centers, restaurants, bars, pub and even storybook red-and-white church.

Luleå & the Province of Norrbotten

North of Piteå by 55 km (34 miles) and 150 km (93 miles) south of the Arctic Circle, you will find **Luleå**, the northernmost of Sweden's major cities, with 71,000 inhabitants. Even though people have lived in northern Sweden for thousands of years, up until the early 1300s most of

the region was considered no-man's-land. After some fighting and disagreement about where the border between Sweden/Finland and Russia should be, the Swedish state and church decided that they had better colonize the unclaimed land, and huge parcels mainly around the river valleys were given to the aristocracy living in the Lake Mälaren region. By the mid-1400s, a large stone church was being constructed at a marketplace not too far from the mouth of the Luleälven river. In1621 the town of Luleå was founded at the site of this marketplace, but less than 30 years later it was decided to move the town closer to the coast, because of the geological uplift that was making the harbor too shallow. With 10 kilometers (six miles) separating the two towns, they became known as Luleå Nya stad (new town) and Luleå Gamla stad (old town). Today, they are known as just Luleå and Gammelstad. Luleå is a thriving University town with 11,000 students, high-tech industries and a busy port/harbor. Gammelstad has become a much-visited tourist attraction and in 1996 was designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site.

■ Tourist Information

Luleå Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), Storgatan 43B972 31, Luleå, ☎ 0920-293-500, fax 0920-294-138. There is also a Tourist Visitor Center in Gammelstad on Kyrktorget 1, ☎ 0920-293-581.

■ Getting Here

By car or bus from Piteå, take E4. By air there are flights from Stockholm, Kiruna and Östersund.

■ Sightseeing

Luleå is surrounded by water on three sides and looks out over a very pretty archipelago. The city center is eminently walkable; the main square is Rådhustorget and from there it is easy to navigate. The highly visible Neo-Gothic red brick **Domkyrkan** (the cathedral), built in 1893, is worth a closer look. The original interior was richly ornamented dark wood with lots of wall and ceiling paintings. In the 1930s, the dark wood was taken out, the wall decorations painted over, and all were replaced with a lighter interior. In the 1980s it was time for yet another facelift, and the church got some warmer colors and a brand-new 25-ton high-tech pipe organ. **Konstens Hus** (the House of Art) on Smedjegatan Street is one of the largest of its kind in Sweden. With some 30 major exhibits a year, there is always something going on. **Norbottens Museum**, the regional museum, is set in pretty Hermelin Park. Most of the time there is a Sami-related exhibit (see page 19).

Close by is the bus stop for **Gammelstad**, which is a must-visit. The Gammelstad church, inaugurated in 1492, is called **Nederluleå Kyrka**

Nederluleå Kyrka

and is the largest medieval church in Sweden. The white belltower was built in 1851 as a replacement for an earlier wooden tower that burned down. The original chancel frescoes were covered with "limewash" in the 18th century, but were restored in 1909. The high altar piece was built in Antwerp in 1520 to the tune of 900 silver marks, and this exhorbitant amount was paid by the parishioners, who were mostly farmers. It is a stunning piece made up of wooden figurines depicting biblical scenes. The church is open daily June-Aug. The surrounding **Kyrkstaden** is the best-kept parish village in Sweden and the largest, with 408 cottages. To get the most out of a visit to this very special place, a guided tour is highly recommended.

For a nature hike, head for **Balingeberget** mountain, about seven km (five miles) west of town, which is an interesting nature reserve with well-marked trails.

■ Where to Stay

Elite Stadshotellet Luleå, Storgatan 15, 972 32 Luleå, ☎ 092-067-000, fax 092-067-092, www.lulea.elite.se. A 100-year-old elegant and comfortable first-class hotel in the city center. High-quality rooms in all shapes and forms are individually decorated. Sauna and solarium. 135 rooms, $$.

Hotell Aveny, Hermelinsgatan 10, 972 34 Luleå, ☎ 0920-221-820, fax 0920-220-122, www.hotellaveny.com. A charming small hotel in the center of town with friendly, personal service. Individually decorated rooms. Sauna. 24 rooms, $.

Vandrarhem Kronan (hostel), Kronan H7, 974 42 Luleå, ☎ 0920-434-050, fax 0920-434-059. Quiet location in a natural setting. Only two km (1.2 miles) from downtown. There are single, double and larger rooms plus one apartment with a kitchenette. 44 beds, $.

For **Farm Stay** and **B&B** information, contact **Bo på Lantgård**, ☎ 0534-120-75, www.bopalantgard.org, or **Luleå Turistbyrå** (see above).

■ Where to Eat

Ankaret, Köpmangatan 16, is a popular fish restaurant ana a fun people-watching spot.

Kafé Tallkotten med Matsalar is a bustling meeting place set in Elite Stadshotellet, Storgatan 15. Locals and visitors stop in for a drink, to sample the extensive international fare or to enjoy well-prepared Swedish specialities.

Restaurant Eden, Sandviksgatan 80, is in First Arctic Hotel. Specializing in regional cooking, but also serves lighter fare.

The Bishop's Arms, Storgatan 15, is the only "real" pub in town and is very popular. You can choose from over 100 brands of whisky and some 25 kinds of draft beer.

■ Exploring the Area

For a nice day-trip by car or bus to **Boden**, follow the Luleälven river inland. Boden has been a military town for many, many years. Today, it is still the largest garrison town in Sweden and some clearly signed areas are off-limits to foreigners. In 1900 there was a decision to fortify Boden and in 1912 five fortresses around town were ready. All were well-hidden in the mountain and for almost a century Swedish soldiers lived inside these fortresses. In the 1990s they were closed down, and some of the former ever-so-secret places are now open for visitors. **Rödbergsfortet**, right, is one of these amazing constructions, and the best preserved one. They offer guided tours with former military personnel, all of whom have lived and worked in the fortresses. Contact Rödbergsfortet, Fästningsguiden, ☎ 0921-483-060. At the **Garnisonsmuseet** (the Garrison museum), you can learn at indoor and outdoor exhibits about Sweden's military history through 400 years. For real military buffs, there is also **Pansarmuseet** (the armory museum), with all kinds of armored vehicles that are in working/moving condition.

Luleå Archipelago is a part of the Norrbotten Archipelago, a beautiful sight with over 740 islands and 1,000 islets and skerrets. It is the only archipelago in the world surrounded by brackish water – brackish because of the mighty rivers that empty into the Bay of Bothnia. The beauty, the long summer nights, the shallow, clean and swimmable waters, all make

it a vacation paradise. The only thing missing is accommodations. In the entire archipelago there is only one small hotel and a few cottages. But there are lots of boat services during the summer, so day-tripping from Luleå is one way to discover the islands.

If you have an opportunity, try to get a room for at least a couple of nights at **Fyrhotellet Rödkallen**, on the island of **Rödkallen**, in the outermost part of the archipelago. It's a fishing village, once a pilot station and lighthouse, where you can get a feel for archipelago living. The former pilot lookout tower has been made into a narrow, six-room, six-story hotel, shown at left. There is also a fisherman's cottage for rent. This charming little family-owned and -operated hotel also has a restaurant and a bar on top of the old lighthouse. Daily boat services during summer. Contact ☎ 0920-257-750 or www.fyrhotellet.com.

For day-tripping, visit **Altappen island**, which was very prosperous in the later part of the 1800s. It had a sawmill, an important harbor and 800 permanent inhabitants. In 1908, everything burned down.

Kluntarna is a charming little island and one of the few with a cottage rental. Here you will find everything that typifies the Luleå archipelago when it comes to nature, flora and fauna. There are also five labyrinths, dating back to the 14th and 15th centuries. This island, like many of the others, was used as a camp during fishing and seal-hunting seasons.

Småskär is the island with the most varied natural environment. The first fishermen's chapel in the archipelago was built here in 1720.

One of the most attractive islands is **Brändöskär**, with an old fishermen's village situated in a picturesque bay. The easy-to-reach **Sandön** and **Klubbviken** beaches are the place to go. Good walking paths take you to Stenåkerns nature reserve, with its rubblestone fields. During the summer, *Fisketrålaren* (fishing trawler) *Altappen*, M/S *Ronja* and M/S *Laponia* service the islands. If you plan to visit in winter, island-hopping on skis, ice skates or snowmobile is recommended.

For more archipelago information about additional islands, transportation and accommodations, contact **Luleå Turistbyrå**. For all adventures in the Luleå region contact **Creative Activity and Adventure**, ☎ 0920-627-77, www.creative-adventure.se. They will put together activity programs, ranging from fishing trips to mountain climbing, from kayaking and canoeing adventures to visits with the indigenous Sami people.

Haparanda

At the top of the Bay of Bothnia,1,050 km (652 miles) from Stockholm, right on the mighty Torne that forms the Swedish/Finnish border, lies Haparanda. It is a town that came to be as a result of Sweden losing Finland to Russia in 1809. Until then Torneo had been the central point. Since medieval times Torneo had been been the most known marketplace in the region, but, after the new border along the Torneälv river was enforced, Torneo ended up on the "other side" of the river and Haparanda was founded. Even though these two towns are in different countries, there has always been, and now more than ever, a close kinship between them. Both towns are bilingual, Swedish and Finnish, and there have been many marriages across the border.

■ Tourist Information

Haparanda-Tornio Turistbyå (Tourist Office), Haparanda, ☎ 0922-120-10.

■ Getting Here

Take E4 by car or bus. The closest airport is Luleå, 130 km (81 miles) away; for long-distance bus timetables consult www.ltnbd.se.

■ Sightseeing & Adventures

There is not much to do and see in downtown Haparanda, but the train station built in 1918 is worth a look. It is a grandiose building where not much is going on these days. Another striking building that you can't miss is Haparanda Kyrka an incredibly ugly rather new construction made out of copper that looks like of a huge silo.

For golfers, there is a must-do – playing at **Haparanda Golf Club**, ☎ 0922-106-60. Wih 18 holes in a forest, park and seaside setting, this is one of the most unusual golf courses in the world. It is the only one situated in two different countries, with 11 holes in Sweden and seven in Finland. During a round, golfers will cross the border four times!

Haparanda Skärgårds Nationalpark was inaugurated as a national park in 1995. It consists of two larger islands, some islets and skerrets, a unique three-km/two-mile sand reef and the surrounding waters. Sandskär is the largest of the islands, with unusual flora and a stopover for over 200 species of birds. This national park is part of the 300-km (186-mile) Bothnian archipelago, into which five rivers emtpy their fresh meltwater. For information, boat trips, guided tours and cottage rentals,

contact **Bosmina Skärgårdsturer**, ☎ 0922-133-95, www.bosmina.bd.se, or the Tourist Office.

Lamprey traps in Kukkolaforsen

For outdoor enthusiasts there is a true paradise just 15 km (nine miles) north of Haparanda, and right on the Torne river called **Kukkolaforsen**. It has been a place for fishing ever since medieval times. In this old fishing village, whitefish are still being caught in the same way as was done in the 17th century. This method is called *sikhävning*, in which special long poles with hoop-nets at the ends are dragged through the rapids. This is a perfect place to spend a few days to experience unique fishing, whitewater rafting in foaming rapids or just enjoy the untamed wilderness. Or you can enjoy the fabulous saunas at hotel **Kukkolaforsen Turist & Konferens**, Kukkolaforsen 184, 953 91 Haparanda, ☎ 0922-310-00, fax 0920-310-30, www.kukkolaforsen.se.

■ Where to Stay

Haparanda Stadshotel, Torget 7, 953 31 Haparanda, ☎ 0922-614-90, fax 0922-102-23. This hotel was built and inaugurated in 1900 and at the time no cost was spared. It was designed by well-known architects from Stockholm, construction workers and carpenters came from Sundsvall and stucco workers were brought here from Italy. The hotel has recently been restored to its former glory with red plush upholstery, stucco work and crystal chandeliers. Bar and restaurant. 89 rooms, $$.

STF/HI Vandrarhem (hostel), Strandgatan 26, 953 31 Haparanda, ☎ 0922-611-71, fax 0922-617-84, www.haparandavandrarhem.com. River views, restaurant. 61 beds, $.

For **Farm Stay** and **B&B** information contact **Bo på Lantgård**, ☎ 0534-120-75, www.bopalantgard.org, or **Haparanda Turistbyrå**, above.

The Inland North – More Spaces Than Places

To travel through the inland of north Sweden is to experience Europe's last wilderness. Here you will have an opportunity to play golf in the snow, ski in the

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middle of summer, or hike in full daylight at midnight. In winter time, you can stay in a hotel entirely made out of ice and, if in luck, experience the mesmerizing display of light in the Arctic winter skies known as the Northern Lights (Aurora Borealis). The magical Inland North, with so many more wide-open spaces than populated places, combined with northern Norway, northern Finland and the Kola peninsula in Russia, is the homeland of the indigenous Sami people.

Starting from the north, the inland route will take you through the provinces of Lappland, Jämtland and Härjedalen. Most of this journey will follow Highway 45, with detours on various country roads. Be sure to keep an eye out for wandering reindeer and moose, especially at dawn and dusk.

When it comes to dining and lodging, although there is no risk of luxury overload, that should not prevent anyone from exploring this part of Sweden. There is pure, fresh air and untouched wilderness, and there are an abundance of trails in and around forests, mountains, valleys and marshland. Just bring a thermos filled with hot coffee and a sandwich and set out for a few hours on a nature walk, or, for those interested in more serious hiking, head for any of the many network trails with overnight cabins and perfectly spaced mountain stations. Any of the places that offer accommodations will be happy to set you off in the right direction or you can contact any tourist office where they will sell you trail maps and offer plenty of suggestions. You can stop anywhere for a cool drink of water or a dip in fresh mountain waters. It is easy and inexpensive to obtain a fishing permit and, wherever there is water, which there is plenty of, there are fish. Whether driving, taking a bus, or the fabulous Inlandsbanan train (see page 125), there are miles upon miles of wild, vast, beautiful and varied landscapes, dotted with small, pretty white churches that date back hundreds of years. Unpredictable weather and mosquitos just add to the adventure. To be in this untouched environment is truly beneficial to the soul.

The Province of Lappland

At the top of Europe is Lappland, or Sapmi in Sami language. Swedish Lappland is by far the largest province in the Sweden, covering almost 27% of the country, but only 1.2% of the Swedish population live here. It is home to nine national parks, numerous nature reserves and Sweden's highest mountain, Kebnekaise, 2,117 m (6,945 feet). It is also the home of Santa Claus, a statement much disputed by the inhabitants of Finnish Lappland. Lappland is situated in the same latitudes as Alaska to the west and Siberia to the east, but the climate here is sub-arctic due to the warming effect of the Gulf Stream, which makes it livable. However,

the winters can be very cold and they are dark, even though the locals insist that it is not entirely dark. They call the darkness "the blue twilight."

■ Kiruna

The city of Kiruna is enormous, just like the province itself. It is half the size of Switzerland and, although only 26,000 people live here, it is still the densest population center in Lappland. In summer, the sun does not set at all for 50 nights, and in winter, it never rises for 40 days. However, in reality, the light summer nights are many more than 50 and the dark winter days many more than 40. There are basically only two seasons in these latitudes: winter lasts from October when the snow usually starts to fall to May, when the snow disappears, and summer lasts from June to September. During both seasons there are plenty of places that rent equipment, but in summer bring your own comfortable, well-used hiking boots and plenty of mosquito repellent.

Kiruna was founded in 1900 and came to be through the discovery of iron ore at the turn of the century. Kiruna is a stepping-off point for two fabulous resort areas, Björkliden and Riksgränsen, and also for sunny Abisko National Park. The more difficult to reach and rainy Vadvetjåkka National Park, as well as Sweden's highest mountain, Kebnekaise, are also nearby. So too, is Kungsleden, Sweden's best-known hiking and skiing trail. In other words, it is a perfect spot for anybody interested in walking, hiking, biking or skiing in unspoiled nature. There are trails suitable for inexperienced outdoor lovers, as well as very strenuous adventure hikes for the experienced.

Tourist Information

Kiruna Lappland Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), Lars Janssongatan 17981 22, Kiruna, ☎ 0980-188-80, fax 0980-182-86, www.lappland.se, www.kiruna.se.

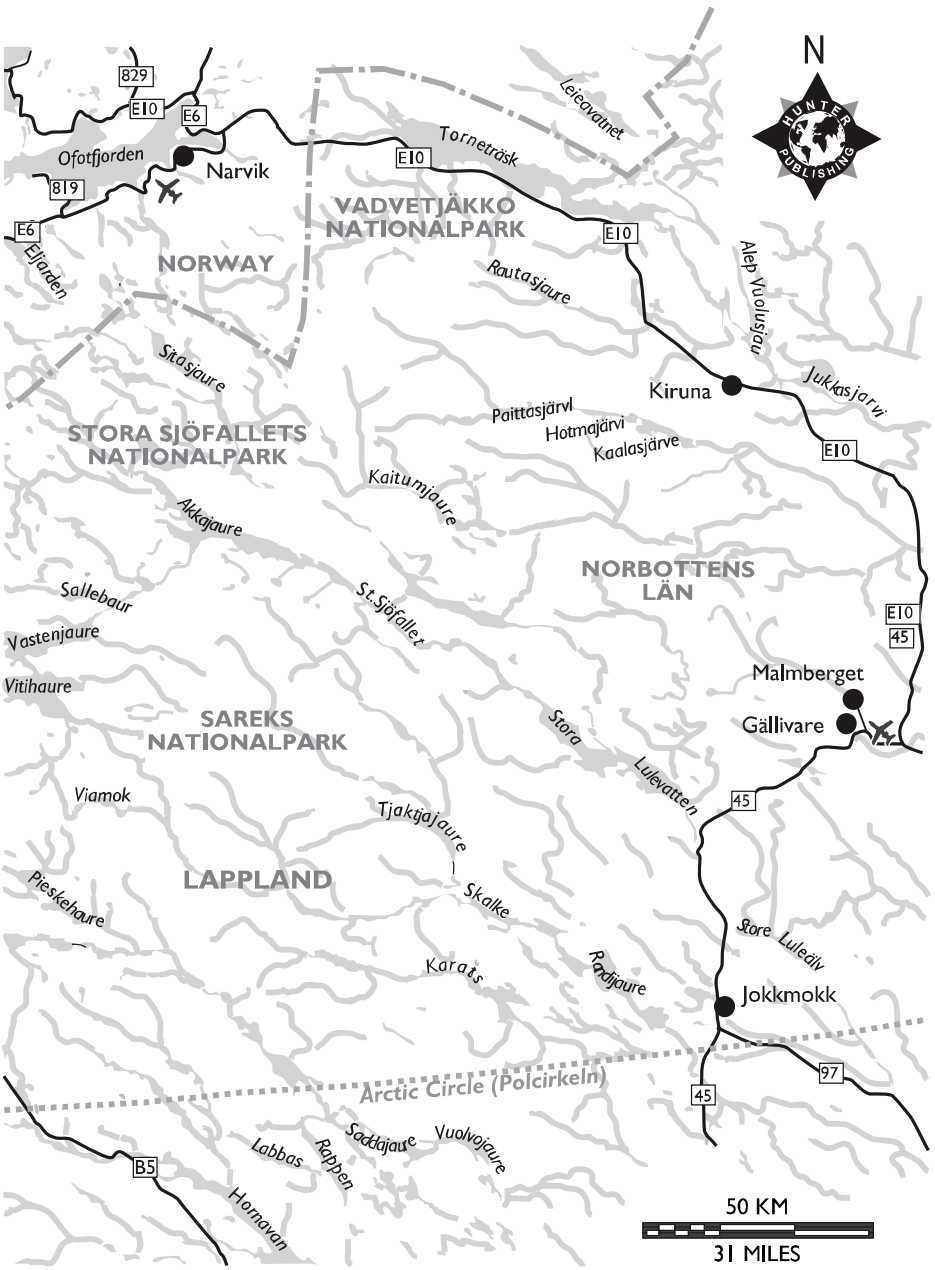
How to Get Here

By air from Stockholm, train or coach from most major destinations in North Sweden, or by rental car if you do not mind driving long distances on empty roads through miles of coniferous forests. Kiruna is 1,352 km (840 miles) from Stockholm, 352 km (219 miles) from Haparanda, 341 km (212 miles) from Luleå, 814 km (506 miles) from Östersund and 180 km (112 miles) from Narvik (Norway).

How to Get Around

By rental car is the most convenient way, but there are also buses, trains, helicopter services and local tour operators who offer transportation. For winter driving, all rental cars are equipped with studded tires and the main roads are usually well cleared of snow.

Northern Lappland



Sightseeing

The city center is 550 m above sea level (1,804 feet) and is easily explored on foot. **Kiruna Kyrka**, consecrated in 1912, is a church well worth a visit. It is an interesting wooden structure built as a Sami kåta (Sami tipi/wigwam). The altar painting is by Prince Eugen, the Swedish painter-prince.

The **Kirunavaara** iron ore mine is the world's largest underground mine and can be visited. It is owned by the LKAB mining company and they offer a very interesting and informative tour that goes down to 540 m (1,800 feet) underground. Today mining goes on at a depth 1,045 m (3,428 feet). Contact Gruvstadens GuideService, ☎ 070-251-2300, or LKAB, ☎ 0980-710-16. Mining is still important in Kiruna, but just as important today is tourism and high tech research.

Kiruna Kyrka

Another interesting place to visit, where you can buy Sami handicrafts, is the **Mattarahkka** center, run by Sami women.

Where to Stay

Hotell Vinterpalatset, Järnvägsgatan 18, 981 21 Kiruna, ☎ 0980-677-70, fax 0980-130-50, www.kiruna.se/vinterpalatset. A small, privately owned hotel in one of Kiruna's oldest buildings. Renovated in 2001. Individual room décor. Personal service. Sauna, sunroom, Jacuzzi. 20 rooms, $$.

Gullriset Lägenhetshotellet, Bromsgatan 12, Kiruna, ☎ 0980-109-37, fax 0980-147-00, www.fabmf.se. A centrally located apartment hotel. 56 apartments with kitchens, $.

Kiruna STF Vandrarhem (hostel), Bergmästaregatan 7, 981 33 Kiruna, ☎ 0980-171-95, fax 0980-841-42. Located right in the city center. 90 beds, $.

Exploring the Area

Some 40 km (25 miles) east of town is the Swedish Space Corporation's **Esrange**, a rocket testing station in the middle of the forest. This is Sweden's only space center and the only one in Europe that is non-military. Every year some 20 unmanned rockets are launched from here. Esrange is also a center for high-altitude balloons, performing environmental studies. and there is also an important satellite program. Tours offered throughout the year. Contact Gruvstadens Guideservice, ☎ 070-251-2300, or Kiruna Forskningsturism, ☎ 0980-402-70.

Jukkasjärvi

Another good day-tour from Kiruna is Jukkasjärvi, 17 km (11 miles) southwest of the city – a pleasant place to stay for a couple of nights. In winter you will find the now world-famous **Icehotel** here, the world's largest igloo. In summer, you can visit the **Icehotel Art Center** and try

a cool drink in the Absolut Ice Bar. All kinds of wilderness activities are offered from here throughout the year. In winter, it is one of the best places in Sweden for dog sledging. While you are here, visit **Jukkasjärvi Kyrka**, the first church built in Lappland, 1603-1608.

■ Where to Stay

Icehotel, 981 91 Jukkasjärvi, ☎ 0980-668-00, fax 0980-668-90, www.icehotel.com. All year there are 30 wooden cottages and in winter 40 cool "rooms" in the Icehotel. Icehotel $$$, cabins $$. Lot of activities organized. The Icehotel is without a doubt Europe's coolest hotel. Just imagine – 4,000 tons of ice and 30,000 tons of snow are used each year to construct this giant 60-room igloo. Every winter it stands on a flat by the Torne river in the tiny village of Jukkasjärvi, which is about 17 km (10 miles) east of Kiruna and 200 km (124 miles) north of the Arctic Circle.

Icehotel

The Icehotel is the brainchild of Kiruna entrepreneur Yngve Bergqvist who, in 1990, built an igloo right on the frozen Torne river with the purpose of using it as an art gallery for Japanese and French ice artists visiting Jukkasjärvi. Some visitors decided to spend a night in the gallery and the hotel idea was born. The first Icehotel was a basic and modest construction, but a couple of years later, with the help of expert architect Aimo Raisanen, it became a full-service hotel resort. Every year some 30 local artists and construction workers are recruited to create the fabulous igloo hotel, the ice furniture, and the decorations. In addition, guest artists from other parts of Sweden and from abroad are invited to decorate some of the suites, taking an artistic pleasure and innovative approach in carving amazingly elaborate pieces. Everything in sight suggests a perfect balance between the wild and the developed.

Construction on this annually brand new hotel usually starts by the end of October and it normally opens in mid-December. The architecture changes from year to year, but the "snice" (snow and ice) concept remains the same. And every spring, as the last guests check out, the magnificent ice creation starts to melt and is eventually reduced to a puddle of water.

To visit this polar hideaway in winter is like being in a surreal fairytale fantasy world. Everything inside and out is made of snow and ice: furniture, chandeliers, silverware, glassware, etc. After a customary evening bedtime sauna, guests are zipped up in special insulated sleeping bags

and go to sleep on beds made out of ice, covered with reindeer skins. For this bone-chilling experience, the rooms keep a temperature of about -5°C (23°F) and visitors from around the world gladly spend 2,000 SEK per room per night. For the ornately carved suites, add another 1,000 SEK. The indoor temperature is still comfortable compared to the outdoor temperature, which at times drops to -40°C (-40°F). An added bonus to this fantasy wonderland is the dazzling white wilderness that surrounds the igloo complex, a perfect blend between the natural environment and architecture.

For entertainment there is the **Ice Globe Theatre**, a 500-seat theater featuring Shakespeare, operas, and rock concerts, from mid-January to the beginning of April. There is an art gallery, a cinema and, of course, the Absolut Icebar. There is even an ice chapel where people can get married. The hotel arranges a multitude of outdoor activities such as wilderness snowmobile safaris, dog sledding, ice fishing, and visits to Sami camps where visitors can take lessons in how to drive a reindeer sled or how to lasso a reindeer.

Icehotel entrance

To start this cool experience off in a proper manner, a dogsled transfer from Kiruna airport can be arranged by the hotel. Warm clothing can be rented, as well as skis and snowshoes. Not to worry – if, after one night you find the Icehotel too chilly, there are 30 heated cottages next door that might have space available. The cottages also stay open in summer. And for those visiting Jukkasjärvi in wintertime, who are not staying at the Icehotel, day visitors are welcome between 10 am and 4 pm for a small entrance fee.

Nikkaluotka

Nikkaluotka, 66 km (41 miles) west of Kiruna, is the starting point for exploring the **Kebnekaise**. At 2,117 m (6,945 feet), it is the highest mountain in Sweden and on a clear day, from the top you can see some 10% of the entire country, as well as six impressive mountain tops over 2,000 m (6,500 feet)

■ Where to Stay

Kebnekaise Fjällstation, ☎ 0980-550-00, fax 0980-550-48, www.stfkebnekaise.com. Located at the foot of Kebnekaise mountain, this hotel and hostel is spread out over six buildings. Res-

taurant, mini-market, café, sauna and organized tours and activities are offered. Open from March to Sept. 196 beds, hotel $$, hostel $.

Abisko National Park

An important side-trip for a day or more, Abisko National Park, 93 km (58 miles) west of Kiruna, should not be missed. Abisko encompasses 7,500 ha (18,500 acres) and over 3,200 km (2,000 miles) of hiking and skiing trails for all levels of experience. There are also underground grottos to explore that were created by mountain waters over thousands of years. In early summer the southeastern side of the Njulla mountain displays spectacular wild flowers. From the top of the mountain, there is an incredible view over the giant Torneträsk lake, a 332 sq km (128 sq mile) land-locked sea between the mountain ridges.

Tourism is nothing new in this remote area, as there has been a tourist station here since 1902. Today's fjällstation (mountain station) offers accommodation in cottages and in a hotel. From the station there is a gondola ride to the Njulla mountain. The naturally U-shaped and scenic Lapporten (the Sami Gateway) is loved by photographers and painters because of the scenery, the brilliant light and incredible colors that change drastically through the seasons. From Sept to March there are plenty of opportunities to observe the amazing Northern Lights.

Abisko is also one of the the starting points of **Kungsleden** (the Royal Trail, sometimes also translated the Kings Trail), Sweden's best-known hiking and skiing trail. The multi-week trek on well-marked Kungsleden heads south from Abisko and ends in Hemavan, some 440 km (300 miles) away. The trail is divided into different sections and it is up to you to pick and choose which section seems the most appealing. You can hike it with a partner or with a group of friends, and with or without an STF guide. All along the trail there are accommodation services, mountain stations, hostels and overnight cabins. However, remember there is no luxury to be found along the trails. Contact STF, ☎ 08-463-2100, info@stfturist.se, or any of the tourist offices in Lappland.

■ Where to Stay

Abisko Turiststation, 981 07 Abisko, 0980-402-00, fax 0980-401-40, www.abisko.nu. Full service hotel with single and double-rooms, a cottage village with two apartments with kitchenettes in each cottage and Keron, a youth hostel with 92 beds in two- and four-bed rooms. Restaurant with a view. Saunas, shops, equipment rental, guide services. Open Feb-Sept. 350 beds, hotel $$$, cabins $$, hostel $.

Riksgränsen

This is yet another detour 130 km (81 miles) from Kiruna. It is a must for any serious skier in May-June. When the snow has melted in Colorado

and in the Alps, you can still ski at Riksgränsen. Imagine midnight skiing, in full daylight, dressed in shorts and a T-shirt. It is an unforgettable experience for any skier.

■ Where to Stay

Riksgränsen, 981 94 Riksgränsen, 0980-400-80, fax 0980-431-25, www.riksgransen.nu. Choose from accommodations in hotel rooms, suites or apartments with kitchens. There is a new first-class Alpine Spa, wood-fired hot tubs, restaurant, coffee shop, bar, nightclub and lots of outdoor activities. Open from mid-Feb to end of Sept. 495 beds. $$-$$$.

Adventures

On Water

With 6,000 lakes and seven major rivers in the Kiruna region, there is plenty of fishing, canoeing and river rafting, but this also applies to the whole North Inland region with its tens of thousands lakes. There is fishing for everyone and everywhere. The vacation angler can easily find a jetty or a stone to stand on in a lake while waiting for the big one to bite, while the fly-fisher will wait for the catch in some of the rapidly flowing waters or quiet streams. The catch is trout, salmon, alpine char, grayling and whitefish. In winter there is fishing in the solidly frozen lakes. Considering the Swedes' love of the outdoors, it should not come as a surprise for any winter visitor to discover the ice dotted with solitary *pimpel fiskare* (ice fishermen). Buy or rent an ice drill, an ice fishing rod and a reindeer fur covering, and you will be mesmerized by the silence while staring into a dark drilled hole in the white ice. Contact any local tourist office for information, gear rental and fishing permits.

On Snow

Even though the snowmobile here is seen as a working tool and necessary means of transportation, in this part of the world, it also plays an important part in winter tourism. The most common non-motorized vehicle in the winter is the kick-sledge, looking like a wooden chair on a pair of steel runners. Most winter resorts rent them out. There are also plenty of opportunities to experience dogsledding with frisky Alaskan or Siberian huskies.

Guides

Keep in mind that this entire area is wilderness and that it is best experienced with the local experts, both in winter and in summer. The guided tour rates are very affordable and most tours only require a minimum participation of two persons. Most resorts organize their own outdoor activities, but the following are some of the best independent operators.

- **Ofelas Islandshästar och Guideservice**, ☎ 0980-500-13, fax 0980-500-13, www.kiruna.se/~ofela. Offers day-tours and multi-day tours on Icelandic horses in breathtaking mountain surroundings. All tours are adapted to participants' riding skills.
- **Jukkasjärvi Vildmarksturer**, ☎ 0980-211-56, fax 0980-211-56, www.jvt.se. Survival training specialist. Tours range from a one-day "Basics of Survival," with lectures and hands-on experiences, to overnight survival tours. Highly recommended.
- **Adventure Lapland**, ☎ 0980-635-30, fax 0980-674-92, www.adventurelapland.com. Organizes whitewater rafting tours, culture and riverboat safaris and a really fun "Arctic challenge experience" tour.
- **Nutti Sàmi Siida**, ☎ 0980-213-29, fax 0980-213-25, www.nutti.se. A specialist when it comes to Sami culture, reindeer safaris and hunting.
- **Kiruna Guidetur**, ☎ 0980-811-10, fax 0980-822-28, www.laplandtours.net. Offers a good variety of adventure tours, including dog sledding, snow scooter, mountain biking, fishing and more.

For additional information regarding tours and operators, contact the Kiruna Lappland tourist office.

Golf

Börklidens Arctic Golf Course, ☎ 0980-641-00, 103 km (64 miles) west of Kiruna, is beautifully planned, with unequaled mountain views. It is the northernmost golf course in the world.

■ Gällivare

Gällivare is about about 130 km (81 miles) south of Kiruna, 100 km (62 miles) north of the Arctic Circle, and two hours by air from Stockholm. It is the start or the end station for the wonderful **Inlandsbanan railway**, which is highly recommended as a comfortable and fun way to experience the wilderness. Inlandsbanan took 30 years to build and was completed in 1937. It starts in Mora, in the province of Dalarna, but most passengers opt for the stretch between Östersund and Gällivare. There are frequent stops along the way.

In the Gällivare area, the first inhabitants appeared some 6,000 years ago, though modern history started in the 18th century when farmers from southern Sweden settled on Sami land and missionaries settled to convert the Sami population to Christian Protestant beliefs. By the end

of the 19th century, mining had started and the little village of 150 residents grew rapidly. It took only 10 years to become a big village with 7,000 new arrivals.

Tourist Information

Gällivare Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), Storgatan 16982 21, Gällivare, ☎ 0970-166-60, fax 0970-147-81, www.gellivare.se/turism.

Sightseeing

Like Kiruna, Gällivare is a mining town and, with 20,000 inhabitants, it has one of the largest populations in Lappland, a large part of it Sami. Interesting places to visit are the railroad station building from 1894 and **Gällivari Gamla Kyrka**, popularly called Lappkyrkan (the Sami church). It was built in 1747 with the primary purpose of converting the Sami to Christianity.

The **Mining Museum** incorporates Gällivare's past and present, with the mining development traced through the past 250 years. Guided tours are organized during summer to two nearby mines, an underground iron-ore mine and an open pit copper mine.

To play a round of golf head over to **Gällivare-Malmberget Golf Club**, ☎ 0970-207-82. It's a hilly forest course. 18 holes.

Where to Stay

Dundret, 982 21 Gällivare, ☎ 0970-145-60, fax 0970-148-27, www.dundret.se. This wonderful hotel and cottage village is set high up on the side of the Dundretmountain at 823 m (2,700 feet) and just outside Gällivare. There is a sauna, sun room and swimming pool. Lots of tours and activities. 35 comfortable rooms and 90 fully equipped cottages; hotel $$$, cottages $$. A personal favorite.

Grand Hotel Lapland, Lasarettsgatan 1, 98231 Gällivare, ☎ 0970-772-290, fax 0970-772-296, www.grandhotellapland.com. Newly renamed, this full-service hotel with a very friendly staff is in the center of town with views over the mountains. Nice room décor. Sauna, restaurant and a popular pub. 90 rooms, $$.

Exploring the Area

If you should miss making acquaintance with the bloodthirsty Lappland mosquitos, just a short detour from Gällivare (it is a brief compulsory stop on Inlandsbanan) is a visit to the **Sjaunja Myggmuseum** (mosquito museum). It is the only one of its kind in the world, offering a unique outdoor natural museum where there is said to be a mosquito density of 3,000 per sq m. For information about opening hours and how to get there, contact Gällivare tourist office.

To get into the Sami culture and experience ecotourism at its absolute best, contact Vägvisaren, ☎ 0970-140-80, fax 0970-140-84, www.vagvisaren.nu. Truly unique experiences with a Sami guide.

Inlandsbanan

A most charming way to travel through the Northern Inland of Sweden is on Inlandsbanan (the Inland Railway). It operates from the beginning of June until the beginning of September. Some passengers elect to ride the entire stretch 1,300 km (808 miles) from Kristinehamn in the south to Gällivare in the north, but most choose the northern part between from Östersund to Gällivare. On this stretch, the landscape is rugged, varied and wild.

Inlandsbanan is not an ordinary train ride, but more like an extended excursion, with frequent stops along the way. Stops are made for a dip in a cool, clear mountain lake, to admire a passing moose, to visit the unique mosquito museum, and much more. A host or hostess is available throughout the entire trip to answer questions and to take food and beverage orders. No refreshments are available onboard, but there are frequent stops for a cup of coffee or a bite to eat. And, of course, there is a stop at the Arctic Circle, announced by the piercing train whistle.

During this leisurely and relaxed train ride it is easy to fall into conversation with the other passengers. The gigantic project of constructing this railroad through the wilderness started in the early 1900s and it was finally completed and inaugurated in 1937. There are a multitude of travel options offered, from a one-way ticket to a 14-day pass that permits unlimited travel for independent travelers. There are also many special-interest packages to choose from that include rail, hotels, meals and tours.

Inlandsbanan AB, Box 561831 27 Östersund, ☎ 0771-535-353, fax 063-194-406, www.inlandsbanan.se.

■ Laponia World Heritage Area

This is the only combined cultural and natural World Heritage Area in northern Europe. Laponia was included in this prestigious group in 1996. It covers 9,400 sq km (3,627 sq miles) and extends from barren mountains on the westernmost border to conifer forests at the eastern border. It includes four national parks and reserves: Muddus, Stora Sjöfallet, Sarek, Padjelanta, Sjaunja, and Stubba. Within the area there are glaciers, wet lands, mountains, narrow valley lakes, old-growth forests, including 100 glaciers and six peaks over 2,000 m (6,500 feet). Laponia hosts a healthy brown bear population, wolves and lynxes are all over the area, and quite often magnificent gerfalcons, golden eagles and sea eagles can be spotted. The site has continuously been occupied by the Sami

people since prehistoric times. Today, Laponia includes seven Sami villages and is still summer grazing-land for the Sami's reindeers.

Most of this magnificent heritage area is west of Gällivare and Jokkmokk, toward the Norwegian border. Stora Sjöfallet and Muddus are closer to Gällivare and Sarek and Padjlanta closer to Jokkmokk. For exploring parts of Laponia, see www.merasverige.nu or contact the tourist offices in Gällivare, Jokkmokk, Arvisdsjaur or Kiruna.

Between Gällivare and Jokkmokk lies the village of **Porjus**, where a road leads toward **Saltaluokta**, a great starting point to visit the **Stora Sjöfallet National Park** (Great Lake Falls). However, do not look for this waterfall, since it is long gone. There used to be five mighty waterfalls, but only one of those remains today, the Hermelin Falls. The others disappeared as a consequence hydro-electric power generation. The first power station was built here from 1910-15, a pioneering feat in a then-roadless land. Both the old and the new power stations can be visited.

Between Gällivare and Jokkmokk and close to Porjus lies **Muddus National Park**. It is a wonderful area with virgin forests and it boasts Sweden's oldest living tree, a 730-year-old fir. This is an excellent park for inexperienced hikers. From a few of the many hiker-friendly trails, you can see Muddusfallet, a beautiful 42-m (138-foot) waterfall.

■ Jokkmokk

The Winter Market

This community lies 220 km (137 miles) south of Kiruna and 90 km (56 miles) south of Gällivare (the nearest airport). The Arctic Circle runs right through it. The little village owes its fame to its **Winter Market**. Almost 400 years old, it is the oldest yearly market of its kind and still going strong. The Swedish King Karl IX decided in 1602 that permanent marketplaces should be established in the northern part of the country and Jokkmokk held its first market in February 1605. The market lasted for up to three weeks every year until the 1930s. Now it lasts for only three days and takes place on the first Thursday, Friday and Saturday of February. With an emphasis on Sami culture and crafts, it draws over 30,000 visitors. If you are planning to visit this remarkable event, keep in

mind that at this time of year it is too cold to sleep under the stars, as the temperatures can drop to minus 30°C (-22°F). Accommodations during the market days has to be booked and confirmed well in advance.

Tourist Information

Jokkmokk Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), Stortorget 4962 23, Jokkmokk, ☎ 0971-121-40, fax 0971-172-89, www.turism.jokkmokk.se, www.polcirkeln.nu.

Sightseeing

Ajtte Swedish Mountain and Sami Museum is one of the best museums of its kind, depicting the people, their culture and the ecology of this northern area. They also have an excellent information center that deals with the trails and the national parks of the area. Nearby is the **Alpine Garden**, a part of the museum, open only during summer. It is a wonderful place to learn about the flora of the Lappland mountains. The Garden is situated on the shores of the pretty Talvatis Lake. This is the principal Sami museum in Sweden.

Adventures

Tucky

Make a side-trip to **Vuollerim 6000 År**, and travel 6,000 years back in time. This excellent open-air archeological museum is in the village of Vuollerim, about 40 km (25 miles) south of Jokkmokk. This untouched Stone Age settlement was discovered in 1983. Today, you can visit a small museum and be taken on guided tours to the excavation site. Archeological digs are ongoing.

An important detour for adventure seekers is **Kvikkjokk.** Follow Road 805 some 120 km (75 miles) northwest from Jokkmokk, right to where the road ends. There lies Kvikkjokk, surrounded by hiker-friendly mountaintops, valleys and a fascinating river delta that is a perfect place from which to explore the wilderness on a network of varied trails. **Padjelanta**, the largest of the Sweden's national parks, is nearby. The wonderful Padjelanta Trail runs from Kvikkjokk to Akka or Visaloukta, a distance of some 150 km (93 miles). Those who want to hike the entire trail should count on spending 10-14 days. Hikers can also opt for helicopter service for part of the distance. The best time for hiking this trail is between July and Sept. There are overnight cabins along the trail. For information, check with the Jokkmokk tourist office (see above).

Where to Stay: Kvikkjokks Fjällstation (hostel), 962 02 Kvikkjokk, 0971-210-22, fax 0971-210-39, www.kvikkjokk.info. An old reliable mountain station that has been here since 1928. 32 beds. $.

From Kvikkjokk serious hikers can also enter the rugged **Sarek**, a national park with no marked trails, no tourist stations, no overnight cabins and very few bridges to facilitate hiking in this park with its numerous streams. It is an ideal terrain for mountain trekkers who are experts on outdoor survival. If not an expert, you should go with a guide. The park is rich in animal life, with bears, lynxes, arctic foxes, wolverines and the mighty moose.

THE SAREK MOOSE

The largest member of the deer family, this moose reaches a height of almost eight feet and can weigh up to 700 kg (1,543 pounds).

In Sarek, the second largest of Sweden's national parks, the best views are from the eastern edge of the park. Kungsleden (the Royal Trail) touches Sarek on its stretch between Kvikkjokk and Saltaluokta.

> **Caution:** Remember, however good your outdoor survival skills, you should never hike or ski alone in this wilderness. Also be aware that the mountain weather at these latitudes can switch from enchanting to life-threatening in a matter of hours.

Guides

For all kinds of outdoor summer and winter adventures, contact **Jokkmoksguiderna**, based in Jokkmokk, ☎ 0971-122-20, fax 0971-122-20, www.jokkmokkguiderna.com. They are one of the best! Tours include dogsledding, hiking, and canoeing into roadless wonderlands.

Viri Sami Rajd, Jokkmokk, ☎ 0971-120-73, is another great local operator. They offer hiking with Sami guides and pack reindeers, from half-day to multi-day tours.

This area is also an excellent place for **wilderness fishing**. Just ask for a copy of the informative and excellent *Jokkmokk Fiskeguide* (fishing guide) at the tourist office.

Where to Stay

Nya Hotel Gästis, Herrevägen 1, 962 31 Jokkmokk, ☎ 0971-100-12, fax 0971-100-44 A small, comfortable hotel, operated by the same family for three generations. Renovated in 2003. Excellent food is served in the restaurant, which is set in a unique

separate building called **Grillkåtan Örnen** (The Eagle Grill Wigwam). Lobby with fireplace, sauna. 25 rooms, $$.

Åsgard Vandrarhem (hostel), Åsgatan 20, Jokkmokk, 0971-559-77, fax 0971-582-77, www.jokkmokkhostel.com, is a centrally located and very charming hostel. Two buildings, each with a kitchen for guest use. Breakfast available. Washing machine, sauna, and BBQ. 26 beds, $.

■ Polcirkeln – the Arctic Circle

Heading south to Arvidsjaur, just after leaving the village of Jokkmokk, you will cross Polcirkeln, the Arctic Circle. A stop for a picture is a must. A crossing certificate can be purchased at the tourist office. The Arctic Circle crosses Route 97 and Route 45 and the Inlandsbanan railroad. Even though, due to changes in the earth's axis, the Arctic Circle is constantly on the move, the marker stating its location remains fixed. In fact, the Circle shifts by some 22-24.5 degrees every 20,000 years, then moves back over the next 20,000 years. This means that the Arctic Circle moves about 14 m (45 feet) every year. Right now it is in the midst of a movement north.

■ Arvidsjaur

About 150 km (93 miles south of the Arctic Circle) lies the village of Arvidsjaur, inhabited by 4,500 people. The community numbers about 7,000, of which 20 families belong to the forest-dwelling Sami and still live on reindeer husbandry. This is a Sami center where a must-see is the 300-year-old **Lappstaden** (Sami village). In winter, it is intensely cold here, with icy roads and frozen lakes. At that time the village is taken over by many of the world's leading car manufacturers to winter-test their vehicles.

Tourist Information

Arvidsjaur Turism (Tourist Office), Garvaregatan 4933 32 Arvisjaur, ☎ 0960-175-00, fax 0960-136-87, www.arvidsjaur-lappland.se, www.polcirkeln.nu.

Sightseeing

Lappstaden is an area with 80 buildings consisting of both *kåta* (Sami tipis) and *härbrän* (wooden food storage huts), all dating back to the late 1700s, the era when the Sami people were converted to Christianity. Both Sami and settlers were so widely dispersed that they could not get to church and return home in

one day. As a partial solution, Lappstaden was built to house churchgoers during the special long church weekends. These were organized normally with one in fall and one in spring. Attendance was mandatory during these intense days, when weddings, christenings, funerals, and regular church services took place. At the present time, church services are held in a *kåta* on Sundays at 7 pm during the month of July. During the last weekend of August, a large Sami celebration is held.

Arvidsjaurs Kyrka is a beautiful wooden church from 1902. It is built in a blend of Scandinavian and New Gothic architecture. The Swedish military is very visible, as the K4 army base is here training combat troops. This is one of Sweden's most modern army bases and the only one in the country open to visitors. Special visitor passes are required for foreign citizens. Contact the tourist office well in advance.

> **Tip:** When in Arvidsjaur, visit **Jonny Nilsson**, a specialist in Sami craftsmanship. Just remember that if you buy one of his exquisite Sami knives, you will need to pack it in your checked luggage before catching a flight.

Where to Stay

Hotel Laponia, Storgatan 45, 933 33 Arvidsjaur, ☎ 0960-555-00, fax 0960-555-99, www.hotel-laponia.se. A large recently renovated full-service hotel on the lake in the center of town. 12 of the rooms are mini-suites with private saunas. Pub, restaurant, saunas and swimming-pool. Lots of activities offered. 200 rooms, $$$.

Camp Gielas, Järnvägsgatan 111, 933 22 Arvidsjaur, ☎ 0960-556-00, fax 0960-106-15, www.laponia-gielas.se. A cottage village on the lake within walking distance of central Arvidsjaur. Fully equipped cottage apartments with shared entrance and hallway. Camping cottages also available. Coffeeshop, sauna, tennis, mini-golf, canoe rental. Do not miss the "Floating Sauna" experience. 60 cottage apartments, $$. Camping cottages, $.

Exploring the Area

About an hour's drive south of Arvidsjaur is **Linbanan**, the longest elevated tramway ride in the world. The length of the ride is 13.6 km (eight miles), and you will be hanging seven-20 m (23-66 feet) above ground and water, overlooking an astounding landscape of forest, marshes and lakes. Departure points are at Mensträsk and Örnträsk. It operates from about June 20 to August 10.

A fun and unusual way to experience the railroad is to rent an **"Inspection trolley"** (kind of a bicycle with train wheels) for a couple of hours or

for a couple of days, and peddle some 70 km (44 miles) on abandoned railroad tracks. Contact the tourist office for rental.

Båtsuoj Forest Sami Center is some 70 km (44 miles) west of Arivdsjaur (direction Arjeplog) in the village of Gasa. It offers tours of a half-day, a full day or overnight. Whatever the choice, this is a wonderful place to learn a lot about the Sami culture. Visitors can hike among the reindeer, try some dried reindeer meat, assist with bread baking and much more. At the end of June, beginning of July, there are also opportunities to join a reindeer-branding tour. Contact ☎ 0690-651-026 or the tourist office.

WINTER GOLF

There is an unwritten rule that a game of golf can only be stopped if there is thunder and lightning, so in Arvidsjaur snow and ice doesn't stop anyone! For a most unusual game, play a round or two on the frozen Tvättjärn lake. Golfers use kick sledges instead of golfcarts and bright red or yellow balls that can be seen in the snow. These balls are not included in the greens fee and neither is the optional reindeer caddie. The winter golf course is open February-May. Summer visitors should not despair, for there is also a beautiful regular course, the **Arvidsjaur Golf Course**, open June-Sept. Winter greens fees are SEK 200, summer fees are SEK 100. Golf packages available. Contact Arvisdjaur Tourist Office (page 131).

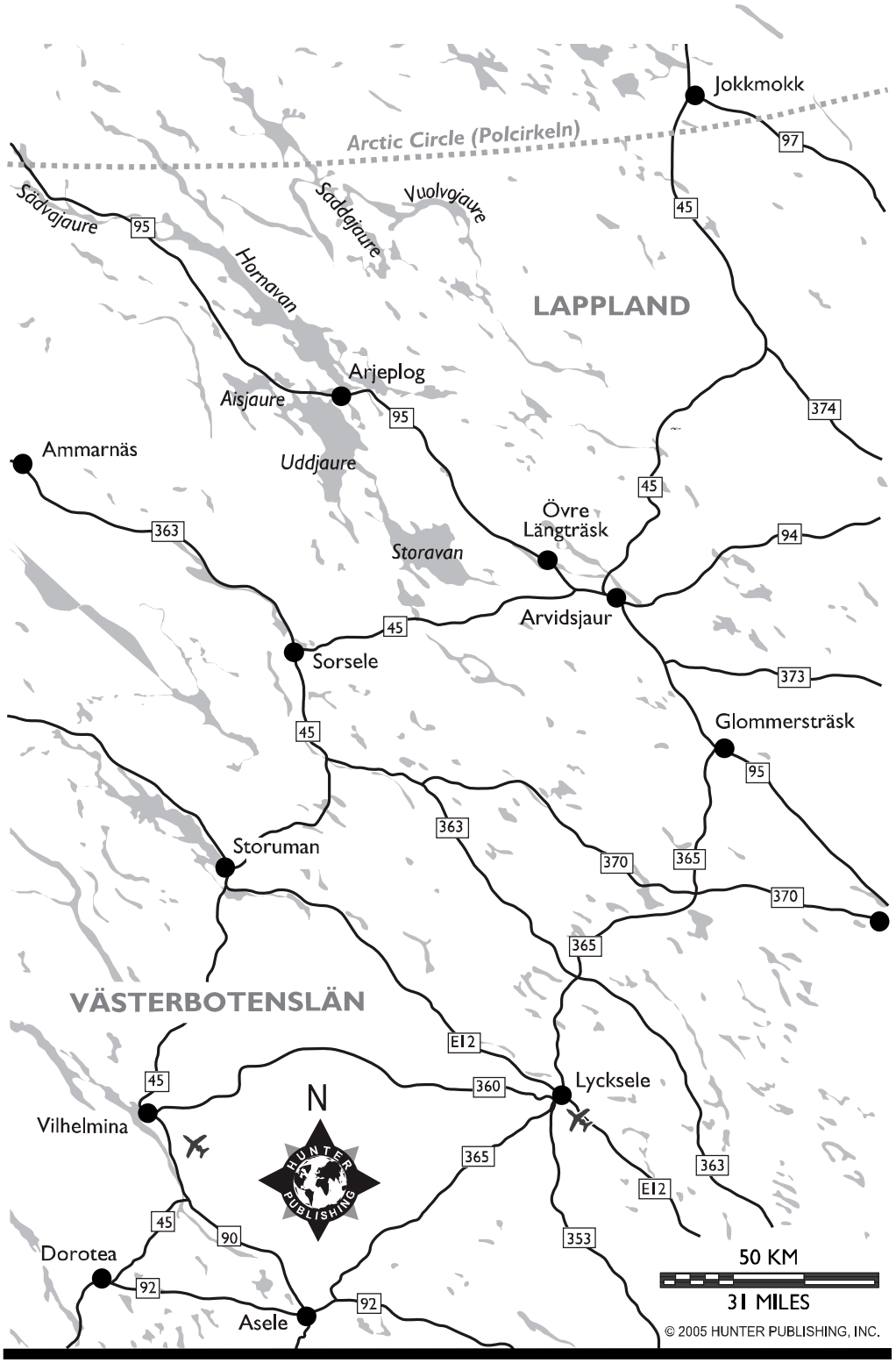
■ Arjeplog

In summer, a 90-km (56-mile) side-trip on Road 95 northwest of Arvidsjaur to the enchanting little village of Arjeplog is highly recommended.

Sightseeing

The highlight of this village, surrounded by water and mountains, is **Silver Museet** (the Silver Museum). It has won awards as one of Europe's best museums and is mainly the work of the colorful Dr. Einar Wallquist, lovingly nicknamed Lappmarksdoktorn (the doctor of Sami land). He arrived here in 1922 as a young doctor and stayed until his death in 1985. During his travels to see patients, he started to collect odds and ends from the different areas he visited, and he became very interested in old silver items. The silver, some 700 pieces, is on display in Silversalen (the silver room), with some pieces dating back to the Middle Ages. All are from the Arjeplog area. The Sami took silver in trade for their furs and had silversmiths in the coastal areas create items from Sami models made out of wood and horn. Silver was, for the Sami, a status symbol and was also thought to protect against evil

Southern Lappland



spirits. When Dr. Wallquist retired in 1962, he created this museum from an old vacated schoolhouse. The museum also houses many other exhibits related to this area. Lappmarksdoktorn was also a talented writer and artist, and many of his amazing drawings and paintings are on display in the museum. His beautiful home close to the museum is open to visitors during the month of July.

Also worth visiting is **Arjeplogs Kyrka**, left, a charming wooden church built in 1641, and **Skeppsholmen**, a mini-island in Hornavan, which is the deepest lake in Sweden. It is a great place for a stroll and to observe old Sami building skills. A short distance from the village stands **Galtispuoda** mountain, a perfect spot to see the midnight sun, with stunning views of Norway and Sarek National Park.

Tourist Information

Arjeplog Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), Torget 930 90, Arjeplog, ☎ 0961-142-70, fax 0961-142-79, www.arjeploglappland.se/turistbyran/turistbyran.html.

Where to Stay

Hotell Lyktan, Lugnetvägen 4, 930 90, ☎ 0961-612-10, fax 0961-101-50, is a friendly hotel and hostel in the center of the village. A great breakfast buffet is served daily. Sauna and sunroom. 25 rooms, hotel $$, hostel $.

■ Sorsele & Ammarnäs

Continuing south on Highway 45, the next large village is Sorsele. There is not much of interest for visitors, apart from great fishing in the wilderness nearby. From Sorsele, there is a pleasant detour on Road 363 to **Ammarnäs**, a pretty and authentic mountain village with about 200 residents, all making their living from reindeer husbandry and tourism. This is a good place to buy Sami handicrafts. Lots of activities are offered: horseback-riding tours from half a day to a week, guided fishing tours, Sami cultural tours and hiking. This is also one of the stops on Kungsleden, the long-distance walking trail.

Tourist Information

Ammarnäs Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), 920 75 Ammarnäs, ☎ 0952-600-00, fax 0952-603-27, www.ammarnas.com.

Where to Stay

Hotel Ammarnäsgården and STF Vandrarhem, 920 75 Ammarnäs, ☎ 0952-600-03, fax 0952-602-43, www.ammarnasturism.com. Situated in Vindelfjällens nature reserve. 48 beds, hotel $$, hostel $.

■ Storuman

The next village, Storuman, some 70 km (44 miles) south of Sorsele, is not of much interest either. Nonetheless, the nearby **Stensele Kyrka** could be worth a look since this is Sweden's largest wooden church, built in 1886. It holds a copy of the world's smallest bible, which is actually smaller than a postage stamp.

Blå Vägen (the Blue Route), E 12, passes through Storuman on its way from Umeå on the Bothnian Coast to Mo i Rana in Norway. If time permits, make a detour on this scenic route from Storuman to **Hemavan**, the southernmost gateway for Kungsleden.

Where to Stay

Hemavans Högfjällshotell, Af Ekenstamsvaeg 18, 920 66 Hemavan, ☎ 0954-301-50, fax 0954-303-08, www.hemavan.nu. A full-service hotel with comfortable rooms and unbeatable mountain views. Bar, restaurant, sauna. Lots of organized outdoor activities. 80 rooms, $$.

■ Wilhelmina

This attractive village is named after Queen Fredrika Dorotea Wilhelmina, the spouse of the Swedish King Gustav IV Adolf. It's a pleasant place for a stopover.

Sightseeing

I recommend a stroll through the well-preserved **Kyrkstaden** (parish village) which has an imposing church from the early 1800s. The 30 log cabins that once hosted churchgoers have been restored and are now rented out to tourists. Pick up a brochure at the tourist office and follow a two-km (1.2-mile) nature trail and take a look at Sami building tradition.

A side-trip on small country roads to **Fatmomakke** is a must. Fatmomakke is a fascinating Sami Kyrkstad (parish village) with many kåtor (Sami tipis) placed close together. This is a well-known ancient Sami religious site. The roadside church is open from the midsummer holiday through mid-August.

Tourist Information

Vilhelmina Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), Postgatan 10912 32, Vilhelmina, ☎ 0940-152-70, fax 0940-102-02, www.wilhelmina.se.

Where to Stay

Hotel Wilhelmina & Vilhelmina Kyrkstad, Volgsjövägen 16, 912 34 Vilhelmina, ☎ 0940-554-20, fax 0940-101-56, www.hotell.vilhelmina.com. Hotel Wilhelmina is beautifully situated on the shore of Lake Volgsjön and in the center of the village (town). There is a pub, restaurant, mini-gym and sauna. In culturally protected Kyrkstaden, cottages with kitchens are available and there are also hostel accommodations. Hotel, 64 rooms, $$. Cottages and hostel, $.

■ Dorotea

Like Wilhelmina, this village is also named after Queen Fredrika Dorotea Wilhelmina. It is the entry or exit point for the province of Lappland; from here we will continue south, still on Route 45, and enter the pretty provinces of Jämtland and Härjedalen.

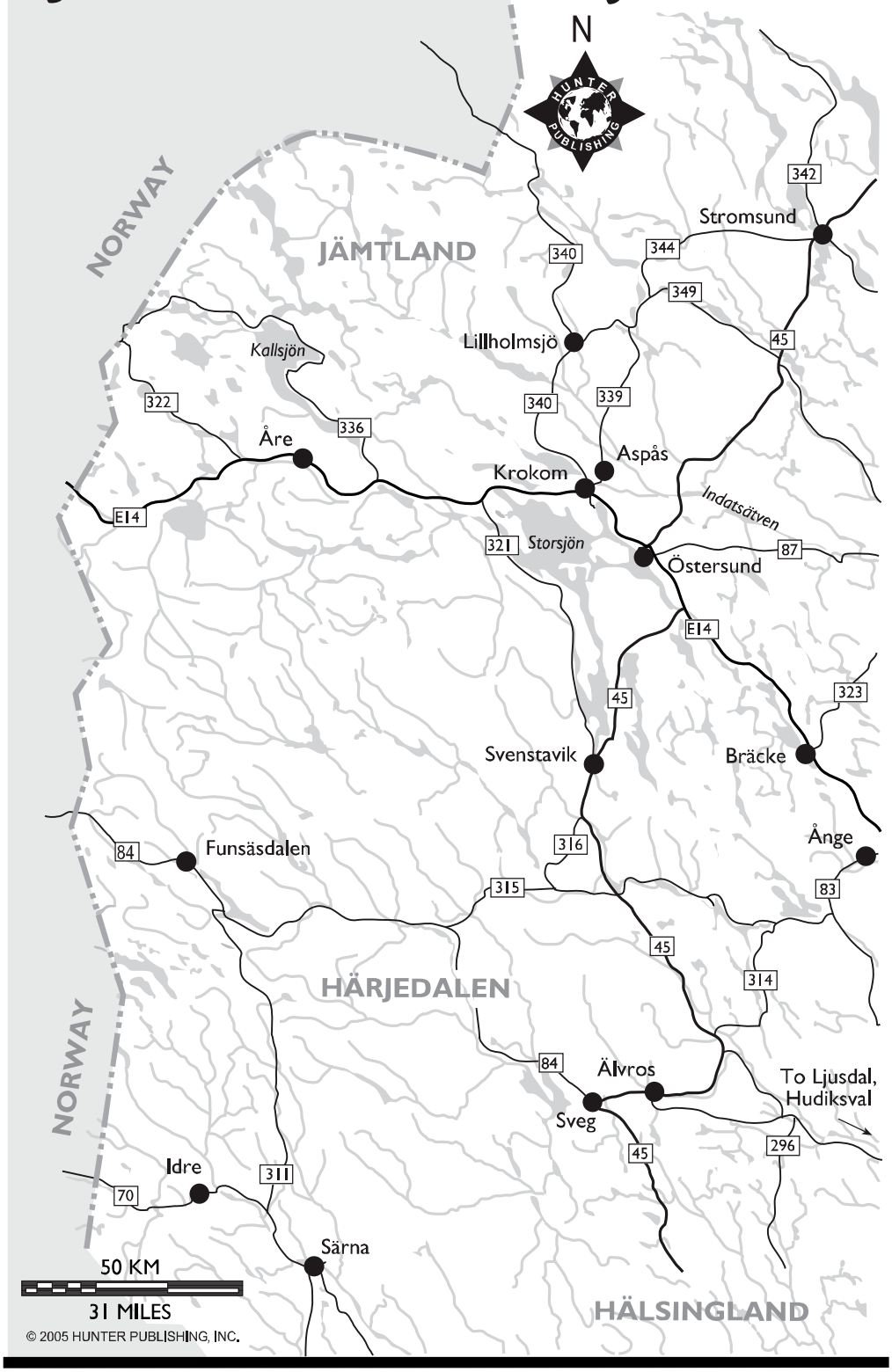
The Provinces of Jämtland & Härjedalen

An intricate filigree of mountains, forests, valleys, lakes, rivers, streams, glaciers and tundra make up the majestic setting of the two southwestern provinces of North Sweden. The highest mountain is Helags, 1,796 m (5,892 feet) and Sweden's southernmost glacier is here. Some other impressive mountains are in the Sylarna Massif, over 1,700 m (5,577 feet), and Åreskutan in the Årefjällen mountains, reaching 1,420 m (4,569 feet) at the summit. There is no lack of water, with more than 17,000 lakes and over 2,800 km (1,740 miles) of rivers and streams. These two sparsely populated provinces, both bordering Norway, are Sweden's snowsports playgrounds. They have over 300 ski slopes, 150 ski lifts and 1,000 km (600 miles) of prepared ski tracks, plus an additional 1,000 km of marked cross-country skiing trails. With plenty of snow, a staggering variety of terrain, and short lift lines, this is truly where skiing is king.

They are also popular summer destinations, with hiking, biking, canoeing, fishing, whitewater rafting, riding and mountain climbing available. Well-established resorts like Åre in Jämtland and Funäsdalen in Härjedalen attract lots of visitors, mostly domestic and from northern Europe. Only 1% of the visitors come from outside Europe.

Together, the two provinces cover 45,963 sq km (17,746 sq miles), about the same size as Vermont and New Hampshire put together. They are

Jämtland & Härjedalan



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larger than the entire country of Denmark, but with a total population of only about 150,000. Most of the mountains in these provinces, totalling 1.1 million ha (2.7 million acres), are owned by the state and are designated *renbetesfjall* ("reindeer-grazing-mountains"). There are some 50,000 reindeer here owned by Sami people from 11 Sami villages. Presently, there is only one national park in this area, Sonfjället, but over 40 nature preserves.

■ The Province of Jämtland

Crossing over the invisible border between Lappland and Jämtland, the first large village of **Strömsund** is a pleasant place, beautifully situated on the water of Ströms Vattudal. The views are great and there is a pretty church. In the village itself, there is not much of interest for tourists. However, it is a convenient place to stop for a good night's rest or for a well-prepared meal at **Mats Cafe and Bistro**. You can also stock up on snack food before starting out on a wonderful scenic side-trip on Vildmarksvägen (the wilderness route) or before continuing south toward the city of Östersund.

Tourist Information

Strömsunds Turisbyrå, (Tourist Office), Storgatan 6, 83333 Strömsund, ☎ 0670-164-00, www stromsund.se.

Jämtland Härjedalen Turism (Tourist information), Rådhusgatan 44 83182 Östersund, ☎ 063-144-022, fax 063-109-335, www.jamtland.info, www.harjedalen.info.

Sightseeing

The **Vildmarksvägen** (the Wilderness Route) starts in Strömsund – a spectacular journey with breathtaking views around every curve in the road. As you drive north on Road 342, one of your first stops should be **Hällingsåfallet**, a 43-m (141-foot) waterfall that gushes into northern Europe's longest water-filled canyon. Even better, stay a night or more at the charming **Svaninge Herrgård**, a manor built in 1870 with a splendid view over Lake Svaningen. Spend a day exploring the waterfall and its canyon, or take a breather with silent fishing. Continuing north toward the Norwegian border will take you to Jormvattnet, where you can stay at cozy **Jormliens Fjällgård**. The owners, Bodil and Kenneth, take very good care of their guests. Alternatively, move on to **Stora Blåsjön** and stay in "your own" wilderness cabin.

Tip: Contact **Rid i Jorm**, ☎ 0672-201-71, www.norlat.se, and join one of their horseback riding tours into the gorgeous mountain on cute and friendly Icelandic horses. No previous riding experience is needed.

Close by is **Ankarede**, with an old Sami church from 1896 that is still in use today. In **Ankarvattnet**, you have an opportunity to visit one of the longest caves in Sweden. It was first discovered in 1985 and so far only six km (four miles) have been explored. Cave dwellers can join a full-day tour 400 m (1,312 feet) underground.

Farther north on this road you will be driving above the tree limit and get a true feeling of the Nordic wilderness. If traveling in June or July, there is still a good chance you will experience summer snow, which normally lasts here until the end of July.

Where to Stay

Hotell & Restaurang Vattudalen, Ramselevägen 6, 833 35 Strömsund, ☎ 0670-611-000, fax 0670-133-70, www.hotellvattudalen. A small, comfortable hotel within walking distance of the village center. 30 rooms, $.

Svaninge Herrgård, ☎ 0670-710-00, fax 0670-71-000, www.svaningen.com. Charming and comfortable rooms. The restaurant serves local specialties such as moose and reindeer meat. Cottages with full kitchens are also available. Hunting, fishing, dogsledding, snow scooter, photo safaris. 10 rooms, $$.

Jormliens Fjällgård, Jormlien 3350, 83090 Gäddede, ☎ 0672-20-190, fjallgarden@telia.com. Beautiful location, affordable accommodations, and outstanding meals. 17 rooms, $.

Blåsjöns Fjällcamp, 83093 Stora Blåsjon, ☎ 0672-210-01. Four well-equipped modern cabins and three with just the basics. Excellent fishing and many other outdoor activities. $$.

After leaving Strömsund and heading south on Route 45 toward Östersund, a nice place to stop is **Olympia Gården** in Hammerdal, a must for antique buffs. Here, in a gorgeous setting, you will find **Antique Louise**, a shop with interesting antiques (open to the public), a museum (sometimes open to the public), and a beautiful old house that is the home of Gerd and Jan Halvarson and their family (not open to the public). ☎/fax 0644-106-81.

■ Östersund

About 100 km (62 miles) south of Strömsund lies Östersund, the only city in this vast area. It has 40,000 residents, which is almost a third of the population of these two giant provinces. Östersund is on the eastern corner of **Storsjön** (the Great Lake), the fifth-largest lake in Sweden, with the snow-capped Oviksfjällen mountains as a dramatic backdrop. It became a city in 1786 and has since then been the center for commerce, education and administration for the entire region, as well as an important

base for the Swedish army and air force. The city center is small but lively, with many charming old houses and some cobblestoned streets.

Tourist Information

Östersunds Turist & Kongressbyrå (Tourist Office), Rådhusgatan 44, 83182 Östersund, ☎ 063 144-001, fax 063 127-055, www.turist.ostersund.se.

Getting Here

Östersund can be reached by air from Stockholm in a little over one hour or via a six-hour train ride. It can also be reached by train in about 3½ hours from the city of Trondheim in Norway or by bus from the coastal cities Umeå and Sundsvall. There are coach services to some of the provinces' resort areas directly from Stockholm. Distances are 600 km (373 miles) from Stockholm, 814 km (506 miles) from Kiruna.

Getting Around

Östersund is a most walkable city. It also has local buses and a good countywide bus network, but the best way to experience Jämtland and Härjedalen is by car. Some of the major car rental companies are represented at the airport and in the city.

Sightseeing

For an enjoyable history lesson about this region there is **Jamtli Historieland**, established in 1912 and within a short walking distance from the city center. Jamtli is a large and exceptional indoor and outdoor museum with over 60 old buildings that cover about a square mile. There are many exhibits to suit both young and old. One excellent exhibit explains the bond between people and nature, which has so much affected Jämtland and Härjedalen. Another one features Överhogdal Tapestries, woven during the Viking Age. People come from near and far to see the the oldest tapestries of their kind in Europe, which are still shrouded in deep mystery. On a lighter note, don't forget to take a look at some of the fantastic devices designed in an effort to trap *Storsjöodjuret* (the Great Lake Monster). Jamtli is open mid-June to mid-August (closed on Mon).

In the city center there is good shopping on **Gågatan** (the pedestrian street) and plenty of restaurants and cafés. By Storsjön lake, there is a pretty park called **Badhusparken**, from which a couple of bridges con-

nect the city to the beautiful and hilly island of Frösön. The airport is on this island and so are some of the area's most popular attractions. **Sommarhagen**, home of composer Wilhelm Peterson-Berger, has received awards for its unique interior design and is open to visitors during the summer. Close by is **Frösö Kyrka**, a white church with a breathtaking view and one of the most popular wedding churches in Sweden. The first Frösö Kyrka was built on this site at the end of the 12th century, and, although it burned down in 1898, much of the interior was saved. The freestanding bell-tower, built in traditional and unique Jämtland design, dates back to 1754. Close to the bridge stands Sweden's northernmost **Rhunestone**, about 1,000 years old, telling the story of this part of Sweden's conversion some 800 years ago.

For the sports-minded, there is **Östersund-Frösö Golf Klubb**, ☎ 063-576-030, the oldest (1951) in this area, with 18 holes and an unbeatable view. Good roads make it easy to play this course in combination with any of the 11 golf courses spread out around this area. The courses are open late into the light summer evenings and some arrange midnight golf. There are also plenty of hiking trails on the island and around the city.

Where to Stay

Radisson SAS Hotel, Prästgatan 16, 83131, 83 133 Östersund, ☎ 063-556-000, fax 063-106-729, www.radissonsas.com, has high standards and friendly service. Centrally located close to Gågatan (the pedestrian street). Restaurant, pool, sauna, garage. 176 rooms, $$$.

First Hotel Gamla Teatern, Thomégrand 20, 83134 Östersund, ☎ 063-511-600, fax 063-131-499, www.gamlateatern.se. Centrally located, this charming former theater has been converted into a hotel with comfortable rooms. Restaurant and bar open Mon-Fri. Parking garage. 64 rooms, $$.

Hotel Emma, Prästgatan 31, 83131 Östersund, ☎ 063-517-840, www.hotelemma.com. In the heart of the city center, located on the pedestrian Gågatan, this small and comfortable hotel contains a sauna, restaurant and pub. 30 rooms (15 on each side of Gågatan) $$.

Hotel Älgen, Storgatan 61, 83133 Östersund, ☎ 063-517-525, fax 063-138-065, www.hotelalgen.se. A small reasonably priced hotel in the city center. Coffee shop, sauna, parking. 16 rooms, $.

Frösö Stugby & Camping, Frösön, ☎ 063-540-63, fax 063-458-41. six km (four miles) from Östersund city center. Fully equipped cottages. Full service during summer, limited service during winter. 15 cottages, $$.

Lits Camping & Stugby, Lit. ☎ 0642-101-03, fax 0642-102-47, www.litscamping.com. Only 15 minutes north of Östersund in a beautiful

valley with direct access by foot or canoe into the wilderness. Fully equipped cottages with TV. There is also a campground with tent rental. Canoe and boat rental, sandy beach, tennis court. Full service during summer, limited service during winter. 11 cottages, $$. Tents $.

Jamtli Vandrarhem (hostel), Museiplan, 83128 Östersund, ☎ 063-122-060, www.jamtli.com. Great location in an old building from 1895 that is part of Jamtli Historieland, right on the Jämtli grounds. Open June 1-Sept 30. 30 beds, $.

Where to Eat

En Liten Röd, Brogränd 19. This small and cozy restaurant has been a favorite among the locals for many years. It specializes in fondues.

Erikssons Restaurang, Storgatan 29. Traditional Swedish à la carte dinner menu. Try the house specialty, shrimp scampi, prepared table-side.

Brunkullans Krog, Postgränd 5, is a well-established restaurant with rustic décor, good food and an interesting international menu. In summertime, there is outdoor seating when weather permits.

Kvarterskrogen, Storgatan 54, offers friendly service and offers local specialties.

Restaurang Loftet, 831 31 Östersund, Kyrkgatan 49. A restaurant with a view, offering local specialties. Summertime outdoor seating.

Mark Twain Bar and Kitchen, Biblioteksgatan 5. Emphasis on local ingredients and giving customers flexibility to create their own combinations.

Volos, Prästgatan 38. The best pizza in town and some great Greek specialties.

Exploring the Area

Because of its geographical location, Östersund is a natural hub. Head any direction out of the city and year-around adventure awaits. If you missed seeing the common but shy majestic moose in the wild, there are guided tours by bus. These "moose safaris" take you from Östersund to **Moose Garden** in Orrviken, where the "kings of the forest" are so tame you can pet them.

A short distance from the city you will find **Leif Wikners Konstverksgård** in the village of Persåsen, which is a great place to see and buy local art and handicrafts. This unique place was established by Mr. Wikner over 25 years ago and its main feature is beautiful wood

(mostly local blue pine) handicrafts and furniture designed and made by Mr. Wikner and his coworkers, ☎ 0643-445-550.

For another short side-trip from Östersund, head west to **Glösa Hällristningar** and **Gärde Hällristningar**, both sites situated not far from the village of Krokom. The Glösa rock carvings are about 6,000 years old and feature "moose en masse." An entire Stone Age village has been reconstructed around the carvings. The rock carvings in Gärde are about 7,000 years old; here you can see the largest moose "graffiti" in all of the Nordic countries.

If you are looking for oddventures, instead of adventures, head east on Highway 87 and discover some unique sights along the **Indalsleden** route that follows the Indalsälven river through deep valleys and, in summer, flower-filled meadows. Follow Highways 86 and 87 and the river Indalsälven from Östersund to the beautiful valley of **Ragundadalen**. **Döda Fallet** (the Dead Fall) **Nature Preserve** traces one of the greatest natural disasters in Sweden's history. On a fateful day in 1796, an entire lake emptied its water, gushing through the valley and submerging everything in its way. It is open May 1-Sept 30, when guided tours are offered. In the small village of **Utanede** stands a memorial to former King Chulalongkorn of Siam. Here there is a pretty, but out of place, elaborate Thai Pavilion that adorns the northern landscape. It is open mid-May to mid-Sept. To add to the "oddventures" on this route, you can spend a night with the ghosts at Spökprästgården (the parsonage) Hotel in Borgvattnet – **Borgvattnets Spökprästgården**, ☎ 0696-550-081. Open from mid-May to mid-Oct. Brave souls who dare to spend a night in any of the five rooms will receive a diploma.

A good place to stop for a meal is **Lergodset Restaurang**, in the village of Hammarstrand, ☎ 0696-106-13. This restaurant offers good Swedish home cooking, served buffet-style.

Not everything is odd in this area, though, as the natural surroundings are truly beautiful and there are also some great outdoor activities to try out.

Tourist Information

Ragundadalen Tourism (Tourist Office), Centralgatan 8, 84070 Hammarstrand, ☎ 0696-682-090, fax 0696-559-83.

Annual Events in Östersund

Summer carnival, "**Storsjöyran**," occurs around mid-July, and **Julmarknad** (Christmas Market) is held during the month of December. Julmarknad is a candle-lit outdoor market where homemade Christmas foods and decorations are sold. All is accompanied by Swedish Christmas carols and other traditional entertainment.

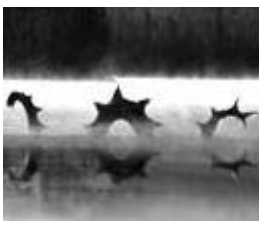
Adventures

On Water

Lake Storsjön is covered with ice in the winter; you can cross it by car, on skates or on skis. In summertime the steamship ***Thomée*** is still going strong, having been in regular traffic since the latter part of the 1800s. It is the only steamship left of the 17 that once criss-crossed the lake during the late 1800s and early 1900s.

For those who like cold water, swimming in the lake is perfectly okay. Who knows, a Storsjö-swim might promote longevity.

THE GREAT LAKE MONSTER



Be aware that **Stosjöodjuret** (the Great Lake Monster), probably a relative to "Nessie" in Loch Ness, has lived in the lake since 1635. This was the year when parish priest Mogens Pedersen wrote down a tale about the mysterious "birth" of an elusive creature, and ever since, it has continued to appear now and then. Many eyewitnesses are convinced they have seen the snake-like monster, which measures three to 14 m (10 to 46 feet). There are eight marked observation posts around the Lake Storsjön, so be on the lookout and do not forget your camera just in case. In 1986, Stosjöodjuret was placed on the protected species list by the local authorities.

■ Boat Tours

Östersund is home to ***Thomé***, the oldest steamship in Sweden still in regular traffic. During summer there are daily tours around the lake and also specialty tours like dinner cruises, music cruises and Storsjöodjuret lookout tours. For schedules and tickets contact the tourist office.

■ Canoeing & Kayaking

With miles of waterways in Jämtland & Härjedalen, there are unlimited opportunities to test your canoeing and kayaking skills. They range from easy outings to adventurous trips that will test your survival skills and from a couple of hours to a week or longer. Contact **Little Lake Canoe Center, Lit** (close to Östersund), ☎ 0642-102-47, or the tourist office.

■ Ice Skating

During winter there is long-distance skating on a specially made 20-km (12.4-mile) trail on frozen Lake Storsjön. Skate and kick-sledge rental in Vinterstaden is located in Badhusparken, the park by the lake.

■ Fishing

For fishing enthusiasts there is **Fiskevägen** (the fishing route). Head west on E14 to the village of Krokom and then turn north on backcountry Road 340 toward the beautiful Hotagsfjällen mountains, where you'll enjoy nature and great fishing. A good place to stay is **Rörvattnets Fjällhotell**, Föllinge-Rörvattnet, ☎ 0645-330-90, fax 0645-330-10, www.rorvattntfjellhotell.z.se. A true get-away-from-it-all place, this small, cozy hotel has nine rooms or, if you prefer, a cottage close to the hotel. There is a restaurant with a view and excellent food. For a unique experience you can also spend a night in a kåta "Sami tipi" on the hotel's private island.

For real serious fishing, nothing compares with a week at a remote fish camp high up in the mountains, so remote that it can be reached only by helicopter. Contact **Drömfiske Jämtland/Härjedalen**, ☎ 063-147-200, www.dromfiske.info.

> **TIP:** Remember that fishing permits are almost always required when fishing in Swedish waters.Contact any local tourist tourist office for information and permits.

HUNTING

There are strict rules and laws, so contact any local tourist office for information about hunting seasons, outfitters and permits. **Rörvattnets Fjällhotell** (see "Fiskevägen" above) offers one-week hunting courses. At **Svaninge Herrgård**, ☎ 0670-710-00, fax 0670-71-000, www.svaningen.com, they offer hunting trips (see Vildmarksvägen on page 139).

■ Åre

From Östersund head west on E14 toward the Norwegian border and you will be surrounded by a most splendid landscape. 95 km (57 miles) west of Östersund are the Årefjällen (Åre mountains), the largest and most de-

veloped winter snowsports area north of the Alps (also great for summer adventures). This a perfect one-day detour from Östersund. Even better, it is a great area to settle down for a few days to try out some of this region's great winter and summer activities. The village itself is situated at the foot of Åreskutan mountain, which reaches 1,420 m above sea level (4,659 feet). The top of the mountain is easily reached by a cable car that leaves from the main village square. In the Nordic countries this is as close as you get to an Alpine village.

Tourist Information

Åre Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), St. Olofsvagen 35 83013, Åre, ☎ 0647-177-20, fax 0647-177-12, www.are.se.

Sightseeing

A must visit is to **Njarka Sameläger** (Sami Camp), on a peninsula in Lake Häggsjön (close to Åre). Here you have a wonderful opportunity to meet the local Sami people and learn about their culture. Guided tours in English on Wednesday afternoons in wintertime and Tuesday through Friday afternoons during summer. ☎/fax 0647-250-42. Take E14 west; shortly after Duved look for the sign "Njarka sameläger."

Another must is **Tännforsen**, Sweden's largest waterfall, measuring 37 m (121 feet) and located 20 minutes by car west of Åre. A coffee shop, open from the beginning of June to the end of September serves special waffles. In winter, the falling waters freeze in mid-air, a spectacular sight.

Adventures

On Foot

There is excellent hiking on an abundance of trails. Contact the tourist office for trail maps and information.

■ Rock Climbing & Caving

For rock climbing and cave exploration contact **JoPe Fors & Fjäll**, ☎ 0647-314-65, www.jope.se, to schedule day- and week-long adventures all around the Årefjallen area. If heights do not attract you, you might prefer going underground to discover the many cave systems in the area.

■ Golf

Åre Golf Klubb, ☎ 0647-206-09, offers an exotic mountain course, 18 holes. Handicap limit 54.

On Wheels

An unequaled experience is the downhill mountain bike ride on twisting paths and steep mountain sides from the top of Åreskutan. Yes, you can ride the cable car up to the starting point. For bike rental, contact **Hanson Sport**, Åre, ☎ 0647-520-00.

On Horseback

Summer or winter, experienced or not, the charming, chunky and reliable Icelandic horses that are so common in this part of the world will give you another view of the rugged beauty of the mountains. Tours are offered in many places, from a two-hour ride around the resort areas to a week or longer into remote forests and mountains. Contact **Åre Ridcenter**, ☎ 0647-340-12, Ottsjö, Undersåker, www.areridcenter.com.

On Water

To get the feel of the power of foaming water and unpredictable currents, try some whitewater river rafting or kayaking. Contact **JoPe Fors & Fjäll**, Järpen (close to Åre), ☎ 0647-314-65, www.jope.se. For some quieter water fun, join a beaver safari in a canoe or by boat, an expedition to observe beavers in the wilderness. Contact **Bäversafari** in Åhn (close to Åre), ☎ 0643-330-12. A picnic with local specialties is included.

There are plenty of fishing and canoeing opportunities as well. Contact any local tourist office.

In the Air

Paragliding is currently the fastest growing flying sport in the world. Åreskutan mountain provides many starting points and the cable car makes it easy to transport the equipment. Throughout the summer, paragliding courses are offered. For true aficionados, nothing beats paragliding in winter with clear crisp skies and landing fields covered with soft snow. Contact **Sky Sport** in Åre, ☎ 0647-511-86, www.skysport.se.

Flight-seeing gives visitors unforgettable moments scanning surrounding peaks, mountains and valleys from the air, and is a unique way to see bears, moose, musk-oxen and reindeer. Contact **Jämtlands Flyg**, ☎ 063-103-670, www.jamtlandsflyg.se, or any local tourist office.

On Snow & Ice

When trying out the slopes in any of the the Jämtland/Härjedalen downhill resort areas, do not be intimidated if a little person wearing a huge ski helmet and a pair of enormous ski boots comes swishing by you. It is probably one of the pre-school natives. Most local kids learn how to ski almost before they can walk. In Åre Village and neighboring Åre Björnen, Tegelfjäll, Duved and Rödkullen, there are 40 lifts and 95 groomed ski slopes (five black, 39 red, 39 blue, 12 green) plus many off-piste areas for superb powder skiing.

> **TIP:** A great deal is available – one lift pass provides access to all these ski systems and the free buses between the villages.

There are also opportunities to try out night skiing on floodlit slopes. Snow-boarding is permitted in all major ski resort areas. In Åre there is one half-pipe, a snowboard area, one snow cross track for snowmobiles and two fun-parks. Snowmobile safaris are being organized for tourists so everyone can have an opportunity to feel the excitement of speed, loud noise and biting cold. They are offered in all major resort areas and almost everywhere there is a hotel or cottage village.

For some quieter excitement, except for the barking when the dogs are preparing to take off, there is dogsledding. One of the oldest and most experienced companies, using Alaskan huskies, is **Åre Sleddog Adventures**, 83010 Undersåker (close to Åre), ☎ 0647-303-81, www.aresleddog.se. Another company that specializes in dogsledding is **Dentura Dogs** in nearby Duved, ☎ 0647-201-64. Or contact any local tourist office to find dogsledding operators.

Ice climbing is the ultimate climbing adventure. The frozen waterfalls of **Fettjeafället** in Klövsjö, **Brudslöjan** (the wedding veil) in Storlien, and **Tännforsen** offer good ice climbing conditions in the wintertime, so contact the local tourist office. Alternatively, why not try out the latest snow fun: snowfer, skim-bat or kite-skiing in Rödkullen (Åre area). For information regarding rental and classes contact **Windaddicted**, ☎ 073-034-3565, for skim-bat and snowfer, and ☎ 063-051-6993 for kite-skiing.

> **Did You Know?** Skim-bats are gliders with sails that you hold onto as you ski. Snowfers are like windsurfing boards that you can use on snow or ice.

■ Après Ski

Skiing and all kinds of snow and ice adventures are important, but so is après ski. In Åre Village it is taken seriously. Here you can end the ski day or start the evening in one of the many après-ski bars, such as **Sunwing** and **Dippan**. For after-dinner fun, move on to **Bygget** and the **Country Club**. All of these places attract large and lively crowds. However, Åre does not have a monopoly on après ski. In almost any of the ski areas there are opportunities to enjoy some fun at the end of the day, but most often in a more unpretentious way, such as in a quiet cozy bar or in front of a crackling fire with a glass of wine or a hot Swedish glögg.

Annual Events in Åre

Åre Gaydays, around mid-January, involve lots of activities and entertainment focused on gays. There is also a special "Gaytrain" departing from Stockholm for this event.

Åre Skutskjutet (world's largest downhill race) at the beginning of May.

Where to Stay

The Åre area offers a great variety of accommodations. In addition to the main resorts in the Åre Valley (Åre Village, Duved and Åre Björnen), there are the nearby villages of Kall, Undersåker, Edsåsdalen, Ottsjö and Storlien, to name a few. All the resort areas have their own distinct atmosphere. Åre Village has an Alpine flair, perfect for action-seekers. Duved is a classic ski resort and is a bit more relaxed than Åre village. Åre Björnen is great for families.

Diplomat Ski Lodge, Box 6, 83013 Åre, ☎ 0647-178-00, fax 0647-179-60. Turn of-the-century hotel and a renowned meeting point. Centrally located in Åre Village with some of Åre's most popular restaurants, bars and night-spots in the same building. 52 rooms, $$$.

Engmans Stugor, Box 19, 83013 Åre, ☎ 0647-665-450, fax 0647-517-26, www.gasthuset.se. Alpine-style cabins with full kitchens, five minutes walk from Åre village center. 14 cottages, $$.

Pensionat Villan, Källvägen 10, 83010 Are, ☎ 0647-504-00, www.pensionatvillan.se. A charming small building from the end of the 19th century in Åre Village. Rooms with TV, shower/WC in hallway. Gym and sauna. Six rooms, $$.

Duvedsgården, 83015 Duved, ☎ 0647-262-60, fax 0647-201-86, www.duvedsgarden.se. The oldest hotel in Åre valley, built in 1878. Newly renovated and today an exclusive small hotel with tastefully decorated rooms in the center of Duved Village. Restaurant and bar. Sauna and Jacuzzi. 18 rooms, $$$.

Duved Semesterby, 83015 Duved, ☎ 0647-260-90, www.duved.com. Beautiful natural surroundings in this small vacation village 15 km (nine miles) east of Duved village. 26 fully equipped cabin-apartments, $$.

Åre Björnen Chalets, 83010 Åre, ☎ 0647-134-00, fax 0647-134-75. A large cabin/chalet village in the eastern part of Åre lift system. Great views of the Åresjön lake and the Åreskutan mountain. High-standard chalet-apartments, various sizes. Restaurants, pub, pizzeria, grocery stores, ski rentals within walking distance. $$$.

Parkvillan (youth hostel), ☎ 0647-177-33, located in Åre village and one of the least expensive places to stay. 31 beds, $.

> **TIP:** Accommodations reservation service for many of the properties in Årefjällen can be found at www.skistar.com.

Leaving Östersund and heading south on E14 toward the village of Brunflo, a stop at **Antik & Begagnat** could be worth your while. This is Sweden's largest indoor market for antique and old used furniture, as well as other miscellaneous items. It is famous all over the country for interesting items and great buys. People spend hours browsing, trying to pick up a real bargain. From there, continue south on Highway 45 to Åsarna, turn off on Road 316 then 315, which leads into Route 84.

■ The Province of Härjedalen

Heading west on Route 84 toward the Norwegian border, you will find yourself in the untamed natural area of Härjedalen. Here, scenery is the star in places like **Vemdalen**, **Sonfjället National Park**, the **Funäsdalfjällen mountains** and the eerie **Flatruet Road**. The entire province is about nature. In summer; the mountains are either intensely green and dotted with wild flowers or totally barren. In winter, they are guaranteed to be white.

In summer and winter, the best place to stay is the Funäsdalen area. Here, on miles of empty roads, travelers will be in awe of this beautiful wilderness. To get away from it all, there is **Ramundberget**, where the road ends at the border of the wilderness. **Tänndalen** is the largest resort area. **Fjällnäs** is perfect for cross-country skiers, and lastly, there is the little village of Funäsdalen at the foot of Funäsberget mountain. The distance from Stockholm to Funäsdalen is 580 km (360 miles).

Tourist Information

Funäsdalfjäll Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), Rörosvagen 30 84095, Funäsdalen, ☎ 0684-164-10, fax 0684-290-26, www.funasdalfjall.se.

Adventures

On Foot

The **Härjedalens Fjällmuseum** in Funäsdalen is a new museum that opened in 1999 and in 2001 won an award as one of Europe's best museums. It showcases the life of the people of this area during the past 1,000 years – the Sami people, the Swedish mountain farmers and the miners. Open in summer.

Sonfjället National Park is the only national park in these two provinces. Situated in the middle of a magnificent forest, the Sonfjället moun-

tain looms up and adds drama to the stark scene. This was established as one of Sweden's first national parks in 1909, with its main purpose to protect the bear population. Located 15 km (10 miles) south of Hede village, the park is easily accessible, with many hiking trails, and the view from its highest peak, 1,778 m above sea level (5,833 feet), is unforgettable.

For rock climbing, contact **Strapatser**, ☎ 0684-211-2, www.strapatser.nu. They offer half- and full days of challenging rock climbing.

Play a round of golf on one of north Sweden's most scenic courses, **Sonfjällets Golf Klubb**, ☎ 0684-102-51, close to Sonfjället National Park. For additional courses, contact any local tourist office.

On Wheels

A paradise for bicyclists and mountain bikers, the province of Härjedalen has 30 marked bicycle trails. One of the best is the 90-km (56-mile) trail that goes around Sonfjället National Park. It follows a network of old country roads. For bike rental in Funäsdalen, contact **Top Sport**, ☎ 0684-214-35, or **Strapatser**, ☎ 0684-211-21. In Hede/Sonfjället, **Vildmarksdepån**, ☎ 0684-100-40.

For scenic drives and sights, a must is to drive or bike the **Flatruet Road** between Funäsdalen and Ljungdalen. This road passes through an eerie but spectacular landscape. It is the highest public road in Sweden, far above the tree limit. You can park your car on the side of the road and take off for a solitary walk into the "nothingness." In winter, the roadside snowdrifts often reach over 10 m (33 feet) in height.

On Horseback

Another charming way to experience this natural wonderland is on horseback. Contact **Ramundbergets Alpina**, ☎ 0684-668-888 in Funäsdalen, or **Trumvallens Fjällridning**, ☎ 070-663-4905 in Vemdalen.

On Water

There are lots of opportunities for canoeing and kayaking adventures in this area. For rental and tours, contact **Top Sport** in Funäsdalen, ☎ 0684-214-35, or contact any local tourist office. For whitewater river rafting and kayaking, contact **Strapatser** in Funäsdalen, ☎ 0684-211-21, www.strapatser.se.

On Snow & Ice

In winter, try downhill skiing. The Funäsdalfjallen mountains form Sweden's third-largest ski area and include Funäsdalen, Ramundberget, Bruksvallarna, Ljusnedal, Messlingen, Mittådalen, Tännes, Fjällnes, Hamra and Tänndalen. With 40 mountain peaks reaching above 1,000 m (3,280 feet), and with the largest yearly

snowfall in Sweden (a record shared with Riksgränsen in Lappland), this is a skier's paradise. There are 31 lifts and 90 pistes for downhillers and snowboarders. Natural snow is guaranteed from November 1-April 30.

Almost anywhere you go in Jämtland/Härjedalen you will find perfectly prepared cross-country tracks. Many areas also feature illuminated tracks. In the mountains of Funäsdalfjällen, you will find the **Nordic Ski Center**, where 300 km (186 miles) of "unbroken" ski-tracks make it the world's longest system. The trails pass close to most hotels and resorts. For equipment rental and information, contact any of the ski area resorts that offer accommodations or contact any local tourist office.

Heli-skiing is the ultimate ski adventure. It's found at major resort areas. One of the best is **Snökompaniet** in Funäsdalen, ☎ 0684-290-00, fax 684 29188, www.snokompaniet.se. They offer heli-skiing in untouched snowscapes at the Helags mountain, 1,797 m above sea level (5,896 feet).

Ice-Climbing

An ice pick, climbing irons, and instruction are needed for ice climbing. All can be provided by outfitters like **Snökompaniet** in Funäsdalen, ☎ 0684-290-00, www. snokompaniet.se. Or contact any local tourist office for information.

Annual Event

The world's largest slalom race takes place in Funäsdalen during the first weekend in May. Contact **Funäsdalfjäll Turistbyrå**, ☎ 0684-164-10, fax 0684-290-26, www.funasdalfjall.se.

UNUSUAL ADVENTURES

For bear safaris, in Härjedalen contact **Hede/Sonfjället Turistbyrå**, ☎ 0684-410-80, fax 0684-108-10, hedeturistbyro@swipnet.se. Try a musk ox safari. Musk oxen are neither common nor tame. A small herd roams the westernmost part of the Härjedalen mountains, close to the border with Norway. For guided tours, contact **Funäsdalfjäll Turistbyrå**, ☎ 0684-164-10, fax 0684-290-26, www.funasdalfjall.se. Remember that the bears and the musk oxen are wild and are roaming free.

Where to Stay

Hotel Tänndalen, 84098 Tänndalen, ☎ 684 22020, ☎/fax 684 22424. www.tanndalen.se. On the tree-line with a view over hills, valleys, and lakes, this splendid hotel built in 1922 is privately

owned and well maintained. It has an excellent restaurant with a great wine list. Indoor pool and sauna. 65 rooms. Apartments and cottages. $$$.

Fjellnes Hägfjälls-pensionat, ☎ 0684-230-30, www.fjellnashogfjells-pensionat.se. The oldest mountain hotel in Sweden, it first opened its doors to tourists in 1882. 31 rooms. Restaurant. Sauna with "ice dipping." Weekly rates. Breakfast, lunch and dinner included $$.

Fjällkällan, Funäsdalen, ☎ 0684-214-71, fax 0684-29084, www.fjallkallan.se. Six km (four miles) west of Funäsdalen village is a cluster of 49 large and well-equipped timber cottages with kitchen, sauna, fireplace, satellite TV, dishwasher, and garage. $$.

Walles Fjällhotell, Bruksvallarna, ☎ 0684-201-00, www.walles.se. A small, personal and well-run mountain hotel in an unbeatable location that is 850 m above sea level (2,789 feet) on the south side of Ramundberget mountain. Restaurant and bar. Pool, sauna, sunroom, mini-gym. 35 rooms, two apartments and three cottages, $$.

> **TIP:** Some of the above hotels, and many others, can be booked through Reservation Central Funäsdalfjällen, ☎ 0684-164-10, fax 0684-290-26, www.funasdalfjall.se.

Special Places to Stay

Anådalens Saemien Sijte, Mittådalen, 840 95 Funäsdalen, ☎ 0684-250-45. Stay with a hospitable Sami couple, Ulla and Jan Fjällgren, at their newly renovated Sami place dating back to 19th century. Learn about the Sami culture and enjoy outdoor adventures in breathtaking nature. 16 beds, $.

Sonfjällets Wärdshus and Hotel, Sonfjällsgatan 8, 84093 Hede, ☎ 684 10064. This small, charming and intimate inn dates back to the turn of the century. Restaurant. Located in Hede village. $$.

Heading on to Mora

Leaving Funäsdalen on 84, get back on Route 45, which takes you in to the folkloric province of Dalarna (covered in the next chapter) and to the city of Mora, situated on the beautiful lake called Siljan. My bet is that anyone who has traveled the Northern Inland will soon miss the silence, solitude, and spectacular views that are found here.

Central Sweden

Mellan Sverige (middle or central Sweden), as this part of the country is most often called, is actually not in the center or middle in a geographical sense. However, most everything north of the province of Dalarna is part of Norrland (Northern Sweden), so this area just became the "middle." Included in the region are several provinces, including the Gästrikand and Hälsingland, which are included in the Bothnian Bay & Midnight-Sun Coast chapter. Here we have included the province of Dalarna, concentrating on the area around Lake Siljan.

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The Province of Dalarna

Considered the "most Swedish" province in the country, this rather large province extends from the Norwegian border in the west to some 60 km (37 miles) from the Bothnian Bay on the east. The total area of the province covers 29,086 sq km (11,230 sq miles), over two-thirds covered with forest. The northern and northwestern parts are mountainous with ski resorts like Sälen, Idre and Särna. In the southern part you will find fertile farm fields. The prettiest part is the area around Lake Siljan, which is composed mainly of lush, green rolling farmland, dotted with red wooden houses, pretty white churches and all of it surrounded by blue mountains. Famous contemporary Swedish painters Carl Larsson and Anders Zorn both drew inspiration here.

■ Getting Here

Entering Dalarna (in English language literature often referred to as Dalecarlia) from northern Sweden, via Route 45, on your way to Mora, you will first pass the forested Orsa Finnmark region and the Orsa Sjön Lake before reaching **Lake Siljan**. This is where Sweden's rich folklore tradition is the strongest. Siljan is Sweden's sixth-largest lake and is situated almost in the middle of the province, adjacent to Orsa Lake.

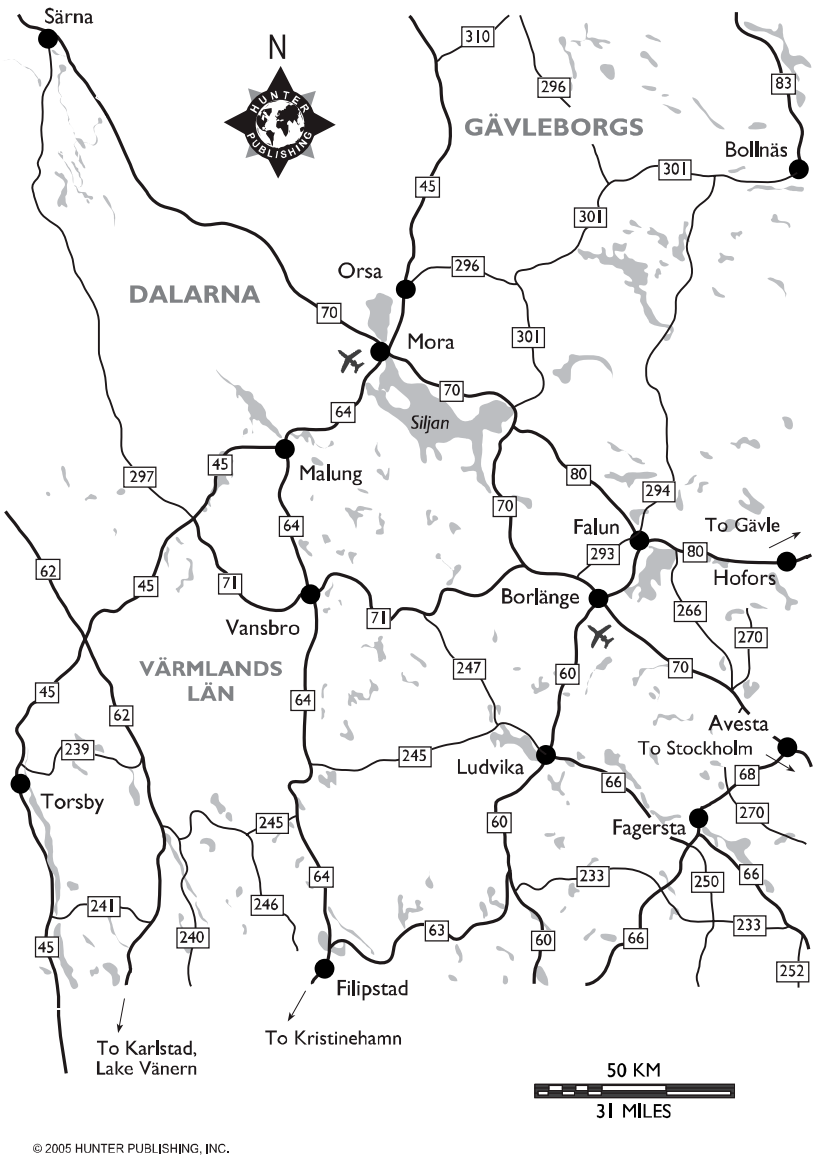
You can get from Östersund to Mora, a distance of 314 km (195 miles), by car, bus or train (see *Inlandsbanan*, page 127). Travel from Stockholm to Mora by car, express bus or train, a distance of 300 km (186 miles). From Gothenburg to Mora is 500 km (310 miles) by car or train.

There is a small airport in Mora with direct connections to Stockholm.

TRUTH OR FICTION?

It is said that some 360 million years ago a huge meteor fell from space and created Lake Siljan and the surrounding beautiful landscape. True or not, the distinct circular shape is clearly noticeable. To find out more about this puzzling phenomenon, visit the Nature Museum in Rättvik.

Dalarna



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■ Orsa

When you approach the Siljan lake, the first town you will find is the quiet little settlement of Orsa, on the shores of Orsasjön lake; quiet that is, if you do not happen to arrive on a Wednesday night during the month of July, when the streets are crowded by musicians and entertainers from near and far. Fiddlers and punk rockers can be seen jamming together, while a church choir might be singing at the next street corner. The four or five summer evenings (lately the first Wednesday in August has been added) are called *Orsa yran* (the Orsa dizziness). The name could have to do with the sometimes rather late and alcohol-induced hours at the bars in town.

Tourist Information

Siljan Turism Orsa (Tourist Office), Dalagatan 1, 794-30 Orsa, ☎ 0250-552-550, fax 0250-552-551, www.siljan.se.

Parks

Hamra National Park, Sweden's smallest, lies 70 km (43 miles) north of Orsa, almost on the border to Härjedalen and just off Route 45. It was established in 1909 to protect an area of 29 ha (72 acres) with old-growth coniferous forest. This area has been basically untouched for 300 years. A pretty hiking trail takes visitors through the virgin storybook forest, a place to breathe in the aromas of pine, spruce and bog or to check out the 450 kinds of beetles that thrive in the ancient fallen trees.

If you missed any of Europe's "Big Four" wildlife (bears, lynx, wolves, and wolverines) in the vast wilderness of Norrland, just head a few miles northeast of Orsa town to **Grönklitts Björnpark** (bear park), a wonderful wildlife reserve inhabited by Sweden's native brown bears and their friends. The Swedish brown bear is Europe's largest predatory animal; a full-grown male can weigh 300 kg (660 lbs). The park is a vast outdoor enclosure where the animals thrive, giving birth to cuddly offspring at a high rate. Visitors have an opportunity to watch the wildlife from observation ramps, so bring your binoculars.

Where to Stay

Fryksås Hotel & Gestgifveri, 794-98 Orsa, ☎ 0250-460-20, fax 0250-460-90. A small beautifully situated hotel high above Lakes Siljan and Orsasjön. 13 km north of Orsa. Excellent restaurant specializing in local fish and game. 14 rooms, $$.

Hamra Vildmarkscenter, Stugvägen 6, Hamra 820 51, ☎ 0657-350-86, fax 0657-413-410, www.hamravild.com. Attractive and well-equipped timber cottages, beautifully situated in the little village of Hamra. This is

where to stay to really explore the wilderness of this area. Lots of outdoor activities offered. 12 cottages, $$. Nearby hostel $.

■ Mora

Upon arrival at Mora on Lake Siljan, you will soon find that the distances are short between the towns and villages around the lake, so it is just a matter of choosing where to set up your "base-camp." The most charming place to stay is the tiny village of Tällberg, between Leksand and Rättvik, on the southern side of the lake. But for those who prefer being in a town, Mora is a good choice. It is a pleasant little spot set on a promontory where the Österdalsälven runs into Lake Siljan. With a population of 20,000, it is the largest town in the area.

Tourist Information

Siljan Turism Mora (Tourist Office), Stationsvägen 3, 792 32 Mora, ☎ 0250-592-020, fax 0250-592-021, www.siljan.se.

Sightseeing

Mora's claim to international fame is as the finishing line of **Vasaloppet**, the world's largest cross-country ski race. **Vasalopps Museet** is a nice little museum where visitors can learn all about it. The history behind this race goes back some 500 years, to the year 1520, when Gustav Eriksson Vasa came to Dalarna to try to organize an army of farmers to fight the Danish rule. The 24-year-old freedom fighter of noble background had been jailed in Denmark and lost his father and a brother during Stockholm's Bloodbath, so he was set on getting rid of the Danish king. The Dalarna farmers were not really interested in going to war, and with the Danes close behind him, Gustav Vasa made a getaway on skis toward the Norwegian border. However, the news about King Christian's cruelty against the Swedes and his plans to increase taxes got the farmers to change their minds. They sent their two fastest skiers to catch up with the future king, which they did in Sälen, and they all skied quickly back to Mora. Gustav Vasa organized his army and, after 2½ years of fighting, the Danes were defeated. In 1523, Gustav Vasa became king, the "Father of Sweden" and, as the saying goes, "the rest is history" (see page 9).

Today some 14,000 skiers compete in the annual Vasaloppet historic ski race from Sälen to Mora, following the trail of King Gustav Vasa. Participants come from all over the world, and this once predominantly male

race is now attended by about 30% women. The fastest skiers now make the distance in less than four hours. Vasaloppet was born in 1922, the brainchild of a Mora newspaper editor, and ever since then it has been held annually on the first Sunday in March. Back then, a total of 119 skiers participated in the 85-km (53-mile) race, and the fastest time was over 7½ hours. If traveling in summer you can still do Vasaloppet on foot. There is a 90 km (56 miles) marked excellent hiking trail following the classic cross country ski race route. Buy a trail map at the tourist office.

Emma Zorn Reading, 1887

Zorngården (the Zorn homestead) and **Zornmuseet** (the Zorn museum) on Vasagatan 36 in the center of town also merits a visit. Anders Zorn (1860-1920) is Sweden's best-known Impressionist painter and one of the few artists of that time who made a great success and a lot of money during his lifetime. Zorn worked in watercolors, oils, sculptures and graphic art, and became famous both in Europe and in the USA, where he painted portraits of three American presidents: Grover Cleveland, Theodore Roosevelt and William H. Taft. He returned to his own territory in 1896; Mora became his "base-camp" as he continued to work and travel around the world. Today, his Mora home, Zorngården, and the Zorn museum that opened in 1939 are open to the public. In the museum you will see Zorn's own works, including some of his famous nudes, and also some of his private collection of other masters. Open all year.

A Ring, etching, 1906

A visit to **Nusnäs,** 10 km (six miles) southeast of Mora, is a must, since this is where the unofficial symbol of Sweden, the **Dalahästen horse**, is manufactured. The little wooden horses have been made here since the beginning of the 19th century, but they became famous at the New York World Exhibition in 1939. Today, some 400,000 bright orange-red wooden horses are produced every year and about 20% are exported. You can watch them being made and hand-painted by skilled craftsmen at **Grannas**, ☎ 0250-372-50, which also has a unique exhibit on the history of the little horse, or at **Nils Olssons Hemslöjd**, ☎ 0250-372-00.

The fabulous **Inlandsbanan train** leaves from Mora for **Gällivare**. See page 127.

Where to Stay

First Hotel Mora, Strandgatan 12, 792 30 Mora, ☎ 0250-592-650, fax 0250-189-81, www.firsthotelmora.com. Located in the center of town set in a building dating back to 1830, this first-class hotel offers first-class service. Tastefully decorated comfortable rooms are done in bright colors. Restaurant, bar, nightclub. Pool, sauna and spa. Great summer rates. 141 rooms, $$$.

STF Mora Vandrarhem (hostel), Vasagatan 19, 792 32 Mora, ☎ 0250-381-96, fax 0250-381-95, www.maalkullann.se, is located one block from the finish line of the Vasaloppet ski race and just 600 yards from the train and bus station. The same owner also operates the charming Målkullann Inn and Restaurant. Bicycle rental. 62 beds, $.

■ Leksand & Tällberg

Tiny and lively Leksand has about 4,500 inhabitants and is well known for its elaborate midsummer celebration, as well as for being a handicrafts center. Nearby Tällberg is one of the most picturesque villages in Dalarna with only about 500 permanent residents. It was made famous in the mid-1800s after the Danish writer HC Andersen paid a visit. He was totally charmed and wrote about his visit.

Tourist Information

Siljan Turism Leksand-Tällberg (Tourist Office), Stationsgatan 14, 793 30 Leksand, ☎ 0247-796-130, fax 0247-796-131, www.siljan.se.

Sightseeing

Leksands Hemslöjd in Kyrkallén street is the oldest crafts association in Sweden, established in 1904. Here you will find high-quality locally made products such as textiles for home decoration, folkloric costumes, prints and much more.

Leksands Kyrka also merits a visit. It is an old church whose attractive exterior dates from 1715. The oldest part of the interior is from the 13th century. It stands on a promontory by Lake Siljan, a true picture-perfect setting for a church.

Where to Stay

Hotel Klockaregården, Siljansvägen 6, 793 70 Tällberg, ☎ 0247-502-60, fax 0247-502-16, www.klockaregarden.com. A little hamlet with 20 old wooden houses. All rooms are individually decorated, and the beautifully furnished common areas are done in true Dalarna tradition, with bright colors and hand-painted flowers on furniture and doors. Some mini-suites have private balcony, fireplace, sauna and Jacuzzi. Restaurant. 39 rooms and mini-suites, $$.

Åkerblads, Sjögattu 2, 793 70 Tällberg, ☎ 0247-508-00, fax 0247-506-52, www.akerblads-tallberg.se. The oldest homestead in Tällberg, Åkerblads dates back to the 14th century and is still owned by the same family. It is now a most charming hotel. Rooms are individually decorated and comfortable; some have lake views. Award-winning restaurant and bar. Pool, sauna and mini-gym. 69 rooms and suites, $$.

STF Vandrarhem Parkgården (hostel), Källberget, 793 35 Leksand, ☎ 0247-152-50, fax 0247-101-06, www.vandrarhemleksand.nu, is located in the small village of Källberget 2½ km (1½ miles) south of Leksand's railway station. There is a bus stop near the hostel. This former traditional Dalarna farm with vast lawns and old apple trees has been a hostel since 1930. Shared kitchen, laundry room, bicycle rental. 80 beds, $.

■ Rättvik

About 40 km (25 miles) from Mora, this was Dalarna's first major tourist destination, dating back to 1890 when the railroad arrived.

Tourist Information

Siljan Turism Rättvik (Tourist Office), Storgatan 17B, 795 30 Rättvik, ☎ 0248-797-200, fax 0248-797-221, www.siljan.se.

Sightseeing

Take a stroll through town and visit **Kulturhuset** (the house of culture) that houses **Natur Museet** (the nature museum), where a permanent exhibit explains the geology, flora and fauna of the area and the "Meteor Mystery" of the lake's formation.

You can walk straight out to the lake on **Långbryggan** (the long pier), measuring 625 m (2,050 feet), Sweden's longest jetty. And if you are ready for yet another church, **Rättviks Kyrka**, is right on the lakeshore. The oldest parts date back to the 13th century, but it was rebuilt and added to over hundreds of years. Today's impressive look goes back to 1793, and the many church stable buildings are from the 15th and 18th centuries.

> **Tip:** A personal favorite spot to visit is **Rättviks Tunnbrödsbageri**, a tiny bakery on Ågatan 8. Stop in and buy a bag of freshly baked *tunnbröd* (soft white flatbread) best savored with butter and cheese, or even better with *messmör*, a Swedish flavorful spread tasting like a blend of peanut butter and goat cheese. It is made of cow whey that has been boiled until it caramelizes and can be found in any Swedish supermarket or grocery store.

Adventures

Siljan on Wheels or on Foot

For a soft adventure, hike or bike **Siljansleden** (the Siljan Trail). The main part of the trail is 130 km (81 miles) and circles the Siljan Lake. You will discover unspoiled landscapes and there are no real demanding ascents. It can be started from anywhere and you can choose any direction. I opted for a three-day tour and decided to start the trip in Leksand heading north and visited places around Lake Siljan that had a distinct old-world quality and charm.

■ Day One: Leksand-Rättvik 30 km (19 miles)

A leisurely first day passing through the picturesque villages of Hjortnäs and Tällberg with many beautiful views over the lake. All along the Siljan trail you will see mostly hand-painted signs saying *Loppis* outside small old barns. Loppis is an abbreviation for *Loppmarknad*, meaning flea-market. Stop and find out how easy the friendly locals are to talk to.

■ Day Two: Rättvik-Mora 50 km (31 miles)

A stretch with a pretty beginning and end, interrupted by a forested area in the middle. You will pass Vikarbyn and the quaint village of Nusnäs, the headquarters for the unofficial Swedish national symbol, the bright orange-red Dalahästen (the dala-horse).

■ Day Three: Mora-Leksand 63 km (39 miles) or, if skirting the lake, 77 km (48 miles)

From Mora, cross over to the island of **Sollerön**, which is connected to the mainland via two bridges and claims to have the sunniest climate in the Siljan region. The island is a former Viking settlement with a large Viking burial ground. This is also where you will find the last existing shipyards for building church boats (see below). Continue over the second bridge to **Gesunda** at the foot of the mountain with the same name. In summer there is a chairlift to the top of Gesunda mountain, 514 m (1,686 feet), where there is a small hotel and restaurant. Open mid-June to mid-Aug. You can also get to the top on foot, but it is a rather strenuous and steep hike. At the foot of the mountain there is yet another place that claims Santa Claus as their own. Here is **Tomteland** (Santa Land), with a collection of workshops where Santa and his helpers make Christmas gifts during the summer. From there it is downhill toward the lake before reaching Siljansnäs.

There is a neat little detour from Siljansnäs to the lookout tower on Björkberget (the birch mountain). It is not a long side-trip, but it is steep. Here you will find **Buffil Annas Kafé**, a cozy spot for a cup of coffee or a meal. En route from Siljanäs to Leksand there are many small crafts shops to visit. If time permits, add a day and include a side-trip from Mora to try out the trail around the **Orsasjön lake**, an additional 40 km

(25 miles). Or, even better, add a few days to include the **Siljansbygden** region, for a total distance of some 300 km (186 miles). Excellent biking and hiking trail maps can be bought at all the local tourist offices.

BICYCLE RENTAL

- **Sörlins Sport**, Storgatan 14 in Rättvik, ☎ 0248-103-33.
- **Stamnäs Diverse**, Mjalgen 201 in Leksand, ☎ 0247-330-15.
- **Intersport Johns Sport**, Kyrkogatan 7 in Mora, ☎ 0250-593-939.
- Or contact any of the tourist offices.

On the Water

From mid-June to mid-August, cruise Lake Siljan onboard **M/S *Gustav Wasa***. Built as a steamship in 1876 and changed to diesel power in 1958, this pretty ship leaves from Mora, Rättvik and Leksand. Prices are from SEK 125. You can bring a bike onboard for an extra cost. There are two restaurants with à la carte menus. Special lunch and dinner cruises are available on certain dates.

CHURCH BOAT RACES

Church boat races on Sundays start during mid-summer. Contact **Siljan Tourism** for dates and places as it varies from year to year. The sleek, long church boats have been used all over Sweden, but are most closely linked to the Siljan area. They came about hundreds of years ago because there were few roads, church attendance was mandatory and people needed transportation to get to church. For this region the boats were built on Sollerön and, since the beginning, they were modeled after Viking long ships. By the end of the 19th century they started to disappear; roads were improving and church attendance rules were relaxed. In the 1930s church boat races started to take place and have since grown in popularity, so the boats are being built again. If you are traveling with a group of friends, you can charter a church boat – a real rowing challenge.

A variety of fishing-trips are being offered, from half-day to overnight trips. Contact the tourist offices.

■ Around Siljan Lake

Annual Events

Midsummer tradition is held the weekend closest to June 24. It is celebrated in all Swedish cities, towns and villages. One of the best places to attend is Leksand, which features church boats, folk music, elaborately decorated maypoles, traditional maypole-raising ceremonies and folklore galore.

Rättviksdansen (folklore festival) is a 30-year-old annual event that takes place in Rättvik at the end of July. It is a meeting place for dancers, musicians and folklore enthusiasts from around the world.

Musik vid Siljan (Music at the Siljan lake) has taken place the first week of July since 1969. Music for all tastes emanates from churches, backyards and streets all around the lake region.

Music in the Wilderness at Dalhalla is set in the middle of a forest about seven km (4½ miles) north of Rättvik. The stage has been built in a former limestone quarry where the mining made it into a "natural" amphitheater with exceptional acoustics. Sixty m (197 feet) deep, it seats 4,000 people. Since its beginning as an outdoor arena and concert hall it has enjoyed huge success. Today, the season runs from the first part of June to the end of August, offering a program filled with all kinds of music, from soft jazz to rock concerts and a 10-day annual opera festival at the beginning of August. Guided tours daily during the summer season 10 am-4 pm. To find out more, see www. dalhalla.se.

Where to Stay

Do as most of the Swedes do – rent a "sommar stuga" (summer cottage) in the country. There is a reservation service for 230 individually owned summer cottages spread out around Lake Siljan. Some offer basic accommodations and some are fully equipped for a more comfortable stay. Contact ☎ 0248-797-200, fax 0248-797-221, bokning@siljan.se. $.

Where to Eat

The best places for really great meals around the Siljan region are the restaurants in the many hotels and inns. Don't miss the fabulous weekend Smörgåsbord buffet at Åkerblads in Tällberg, served at lunchtime.

■ Falun

Before leaving Dalarna, a side-trip to Falun, 82 km (51 miles) east of Mora, is recommended. It is the provincial capital, and this is where you will find **Stora Kopparberg** (the Great Copper Mountain), a unique

area on the UNESCO World Heritage list since 2001. It is a mine that for centuries produced shining red copper for palaces and cathedrals across Europe. In the mid-17th century, the mine accounted for two-thirds of the world's copper production. The last blast took place in 1992, after which Stora Kopparberg shut down its mining operation. Since the 1970s visitors have been received, and today you can take a guided tour. A lift brings visitors to 55 m (180 feet) below ground, followed by a 600-m (2,000-foot) stroll through a network of tunnels and shafts. The impressive Stora Stöten open pit came about after a collapse of dividing walls in 1687 and has two lookout sites. There is also an excellent Mine Museum. Wear warm clothes and old shoes, as it's chilly and damp underground.

Did you know? For Swedes, the town of Falun is always associated with *falukorv*, a sausage that is one of the staple foods in the Swedish kitchens, and *Falu rödfärg* (Falu red paint).

RED HOUSES

One of the most remarkable and quaint features in the Swedish landscape is the high number of red-painted houses, and it all started here back in the 1530s. It was a sign of wealth and status to paint the timber houses red, an imitation of the fashionable red color of the brick buildings on the continent. By the latter part of the 19th century it had become common and affordable for everybody, so it then became fashionable for affluent Swedes to paint their houses in bright yellow or in pastel colors. But since the mid-50s, *Falu rödfärg* has been back in style, and has become virtually the Swedish national house color. The **Falu Red Paint factory** on Kronogårdsvägen 6 can be visited in June and during the first half of August.

Another reason to visit Falun is to see **Carl Larsson Gården** in nearby Sundborn. It was the home of Carl Larsson (1853-1919), one of Sweden's most beloved painters, and his large family. For anybody interested in interior design, it is easy to understand that this unique home has internationally been the inspiration for today's popular Swedish-style interior. Carl Larsson is best known for his idyllic country-life watercolors, often using his wife and eight children as models. Situated 15 km (10 miles) northeast from Falun city center, it is a 15-minute drive or bus-ride.

Tourist Information

Falun Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), Trotzgatan 10-12, 791 83, Falun, ☎ 023-830-50, fax 023-833-14.

Where to Stay

Ulfshyttan Herrgård, 781 96 Borlänge, ☎ 0243-251-300, fax 0243-251-11, www.ulfshyttan.se. A little bit out of the way, 45 km (28 miles) south of Falun and a 15-minute drive south of Borlänge, but well worth the trip. Ulfshyttan is an old foundry dating back to the early 17th century. The former manor house is in a beautiful and unique setting on a lake and has been turned into a charming, romantic hotel with tastefully decorated rooms and with warm and friendly service. Excellent restaurant. Sauna, Jacuzzi and mini-spa. Tennis, boules. 17 rooms, $$$.

Falu Fängelse Vandrarhem (hostel), Villavägen 17, 791 37 Falun, ☎ 023-795-575, fax 023-795-474, www.falufangelse.se. This 150-year-old former prison was turned into a hostel in 2000. The prison cells have been spruced up, but the exterior is still the same, including the iron bars on the windows. Three floors. Shared bathrooms and kitchens on each floor. Laundry room. 86 beds, $.

■ Onward to Gothenburg

After the Siljan adventure you can elect to return to Stockholm from Leksand via Borlänge on Route 70 or from Mora head to Gothenburg on Route 45 via the province of **Värmland**, with its deep forests, blue mountains and sparkling lakes, and then through the province of **Dalsland**, with birch forests and the fabulous Dalsland Kanal, a most enchanting 240-km (158-mile) waterway perfect for sailing and canoeing.

West Sweden

West Sweden officially encompasses the charming city of Göteborg (Gothenburg) and the provinces of Bohuslän, Dalsland and Västergötland. In this chapter we will take a look at Göteborg and the 350-km/210-mile coastal stretch called **Västkusten** that runs through the provinces of **Bohuslän** (north of the city) and **Halland** (south of the city).

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- Göta Kanal 207

Unfortunately, this part of Sweden is sometimes overlooked by foreign visitors. Göteborg is Sweden's second-largest city with close to 500,000 inhabitants and, just like Stockholm, it has its feet in the water and a gridwork of cobbled streets. It is a charming, remarkably friendly city that is easy to navigate. Like many other "second" cities around the world, it sometimes seems to be suffering from being number two, and even though the Gothenburgers are easygoing, they do put lots of emphasis on size. They are quick to point out to visitors that their city is by far the biggest in West Sweden and that it is home to the largest seaport in Scandinavia.

Göteborg, situated at the mouth of the Göta Älv river right off the North Sea coast, has an enviable geographical location, being equidistant from Stockholm, Oslo and Copenhagen. It is an ideal base from which to explore Västkusten, the beautiful coast of West Sweden.

South of the city, the province of Halland has some of the best sandy beaches in Sweden and some attractive resort towns. North of the city in Bohuslän is a rocky coastline, idyllic fishing villages and great fish and seafood restaurants. East of the city lies Göteborg's own little charming archipelago.

Inland, west of the city, there is still more water, including the unequaled Göta Kanal waterway that stretches all the way to Stockholm, the mighty lakes Vättern and Vänern, and little Hornborgasjön, which is a lake world-famous for its dancing cranes.

Göteborg

Let's start the West Sweden visit with a close look at Göteborg. A city of ever-present water, bridges, gardens, streetcars and fish restaurants, it was founded in 1621 to secure access to the Atlantic and to protect Sweden from the Danes. The city plans were drawn up by Dutch and German immigrants with canals, a wide-water moat and many fortifications. But

the area was populated long before it became a town, as it was an important Viking stronghold in the 10th and 11th centuries.

In the 18th century, the strategic location made Göteborg the natural home for the Swedish East India Company, which was founded by a Scotsman and a Swede in 1731. For almost a hundred years Göteborg was an important center for European trade with China and the Far East in silk, spices, tea, porcelain and precious stones. As the years went by, trade, shipping and shipbuilding became more and more important for the city and, with the industrialization in the 20th century, many important Swedish companies got their start here. Today, even though many of those companies have become part of multinational conglomerates, some still have their headquarters in Göteborg – Saab (now GM), Volvo (now Ford), Hasselblad cameras, AstraZeneca pharmaceuticals and SKF ball bearings, to name a few.

The city still has a salty feel to it and its lifeblood is still the harbor. Nowadays, most of the large shipyards have disappeared. Nonetheless, a multitude of seafaring vessels of all shapes and sizes are still slaloming back and forth in a never-ending water ballet.

■ Getting Here

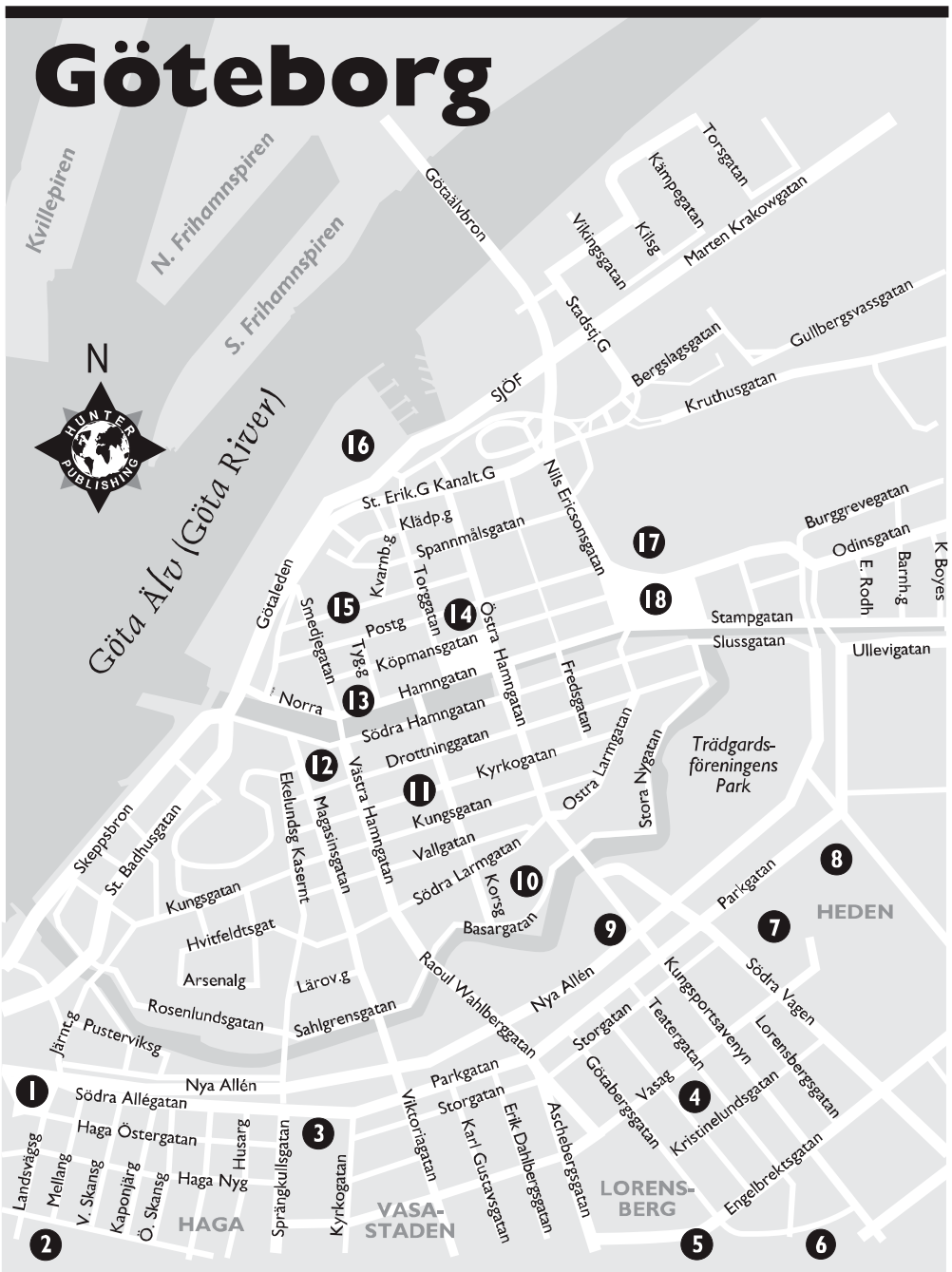
By Air: Most international and domestic flights into Göteborg arrive at **Landvetter International Airport**, situated 25 km (16 miles) east of Göteborg. A taxi into the city center costs about SEK 310. The other airport servicing Göteborg is **Säve Airport**, used mainly by low-cost European airlines.

By Bus: Flygbussarna Landvetter, 30 minutes travel time, cost SEK 60; **Flygbussarna Säve**, 25 minutes travel time, cost SEK 60.

By Train & Bus: All trains arrive at Centralen (the central railway station). The Swedish high speed train X 2000 takes only 3¼ hours from Stockholm. There are also great train connections with Copenhagen (three hours, 25 minutes) and Oslo (four hours). Next door to Centralen is Nils Ericsson Platsen, an important hub for public transportation within the city and for destinations farther away.

By Boat/Ship/Ferry: From Denmark, Germany and the UK, you will arrive at the terminals of the respective companies: Stena Line from Denmark and Germany, and DFDS Seaways from UK. All of the terminals have connections with public transportation and with taxis in to the city center.

By Rental Car: From any location in Sweden, try to avoid rush-hour traffic and be prepared for parking difficulties. Some Göteborg hotels have their own parking or agreements with a nearby parking garage.



1. Folkteatern
2. Skansen Kronan, Skansparken
3. Haga Kyrkan
4. Röhsskamuséet
5. Vasa Kyrkan
6. Stadsteatern, Konstmuséet
7. Bussterminal
8. Katolska Kyrkan
9. Stora Teatern
10. Kungstorget
11. Domkyrkan
12. Lilla Torget
13. Historiska Muséet
14. Börsen
15. Kronhuset
16. Göteborgs Operan
17. Centralstationen
18. Drottningtorget, Post Office

NOT TO SCALE

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■ Getting Around

The best way to get a good overview of the city is to start the visit with a city sightseeing tour by bus or boat, preferably both. Visitors soon discover how easy it is to get around by foot in this city. Most of it is laid out with broad avenues and narrow streets in an easy-to-navigate grid pattern and most points of interest are within walking distance of each other. It is also a bicycle-friendly city. There is an excellent public transportation system consisting of trams, buses and ferries. In addition to the regular trams, there is also an opportunity to travel on vintage streetcars during the summer months. Ask for a public transportation map at the tourist office.

Bicycle Rental

Cykelnova, Chalmersgatan 19, ☎ 031-778-1570.

Milleneum Cykel, Chalmersgatan 19, ☎ 031-184-300.

Sportkällaren, Bohusgatan 2, ☎ 070-727-5682.

Rentals also available at some hostels.

> **Tip:** *Cykelkarta* (bicycle maps) are on sale at the tourist office.

Car Rental

Avis at the Central Station, ☎ 031-805-780, and at Landvetter Airport, ☎ 031-946-030.

Hertz at Stampgatan 16A, ☎ 031-803-730, and at Landvetter Airport, ☎ 031-946-020.

> **Tip:** It's best to book rental cars from the US before arrival in Sweden.

Trams & Buses

Trams are the most convenient form of public transport. They run every few minutes from all central areas from 5 am to midnight, then a lot less frequently between midnight and 5 am. The main tram pick-up points are outside the Central Station and on Kungsportsplatsen. Cost is SEK 16 per ride.

All local public transportation fares are included in the **Göteborg Pass**. Ask for a **Linjekarta** (public transport route map) at the Tourist Offices.

Taxis

☎ 031-650-000. The main taxi station is located at Centralen.

For any questions about getting around in Göteborg and surrounding areas, such as what to see and what to do or for accommodations, contact the Tourist Offices. There you can also find plenty of informational material.

■ Göteborg Tourist Offices

? Kungsportsplatsen 2SE-411, 10 Göteborg, ☎ 031-612-500, fax 031-612-501, turistinfo@goteborg.com, www.goteborg.com. Opening hours, June, daily 9:30 am-6 pm; July-Aug, daily 9:30 am-8 pm; September-May, Mon-Fri, 9:30 am-5 pm, Sat 10 am-2 pm.

Nordstan, opening hours daily all year. Mon-Fri, 10 am-6 pm; Sat, 10 am-5 pm; Sun, noon-4 pm.

For guided one-hour sightseeing tours on land, contact the tourist offices. Several daily departures, June-Aug, 10:30 am-4:45 pm. Cost SEK 80. Tours depart from Stora Teatern. For guided one-hour sightseeing tours on water, contact the tourist offices or **Paddan Sightseeing Boats** (☎ 031-609-670) Several daily departures May-Sept 10 am-5 pm. Cost SEK 85. Tours depart from Kungsportsplatsen. There are also many lunch, brunch, dinner and concert cruises to choose from. For detailed, up-to-date information, contact the tourist offices.

■ Sightseeing

Admission costs listed below are per adult; children's prices average about 50% lower. Keep in mind that, with the Göteborg Pass, the admission fees to most of the places listed below are included.

Lilla Bommen & the Waterfront

One of the best places to start exploring this seafaring city is right at the waterfront, in an area called Lilla Bommen. There are many attractions here and it is a departure point for a number of boats and ferries. One of the most notable structures is the striking red and white "lipstick" building, where, on top, some 86 m (282 feet) above the ground, you will find **Utkiken** (the lookout), which offers a fabulous view over the harbor and the city. (Lilla Bommen. Open all year, September-April, Mon-Fri, 11 am-4 pm, May-Aug, Mon-Sun, 11 am-4 pm. Admission SEK 30.)

Close by is another striking building, **GöteborgsOperan** (the Opera House), situated right on the Göta Älv river. Inaugurated in 1994, it is one of the most modern opera buildings in the world, with an extensive year-round program of opera, ballet and musicals. It is well worth a visit

just for its outstanding architectural design, as it looks like a ship, a lighthouse and a shipyard blended into one, making it fit perfectly into its surroundings. (Lilla Bommen, ☎ 031-108-000. Open all year, noon-6 pm. Guided tours offered during summer.)

Moored at the waterfront is **Barken Viking**, a beautiful old schooner-turned-hotel. You will also find in this area **Göteborgs Maritima Centrum** (the Maritime Center), which is the world's largest floating ship museum, with 17 ships moored next to one other. Visitors use gangplanks to go from one vessel to another. Here, you will get a close-up look at a fire-fighting boat, a monstrous-looking naval destroyer, a submarine, and a varied assortment of old ships. (Packhuskajen, ☎ 031-105-950. Open March-Oct, Mon-Fri, 9 am-5 pm, Sat-Sun 10 am-5 pm. Admission SEK 70.)

THE GÖTEBORG PASS

If you are planning to really get to know Göteborg, your best deal will be to purchase a Göteborg Pass (the Gothenburg Card). It gives visitors free admission to most of the city's attractions and museums, includes several sightseeing tours by bus and by boat, unlimited travel on public transportation, free parking in designated areas within the city, and a little multilingual guidebook with a city map. In addition, there are various seasonal special offers and also great discounts in selected stores. The Göteborg Pass can be purchased at the Göteborg Tourist Offices, and also at many hotels and hostels. Adult cost is SEK 175 for 24 hours, SEK 295 for 48 hours; children seven-17, SEK 135 for 24 hours, SEK 210 for 48 hours (2004 rates).

Nordstaden

Leaving the waterfront via a pedestrian bridge connecting Lilla Bommen and Nordstaden (locally called just Nordstan), you will find a busy commercial area that includes Sweden's largest indoor shopping mall, also called Nordstan. **Centralen** (the railway station), built in the mid-1800s, is now a listed building and worth a look. Not far away is the heart of the city, **Gustav Adolfs Torg** square, formerly known as Stora Torget (the big square). The focal point of this square is a statue of the city's founder, King Gustav II Adolf. This is the political and administrative center of the city, with the controversially combined old (1672) and new (1937) **Rådhuset** (City Hall) building and **Börshuset** (Stock Exchange).

Following the Stora Hamn Kanalen channel, just before reaching Stadsmuseet (the City Museum) you will pass **Christinae Kyrkan**, with its pretty Rococo-style bell tower. This church was built by the large Ger-

man community in the 18th century. It is also called Tyska Kyrkan (the German Church) and still holds services in German. (Norra Hamngatan. Open during summer. No admission fee.)

Stadsmuseet is housed in the beautiful, palatial 1750s Swedish East India Company building. The museum features an interesting exhibition on Sweden's exploits in the East Indies, but for most visitors the highlight is the fascinating display about Viking history, which covers an entire floor of the museum. (Norra Hamngatan 12, ☎ 031-612-770. Open all year, Tue-Sun, 10 am-5 pm, May-Aug, daily, 10 am-5 pm. Admission SEK 40. Guided tours offered during summer.)

Inom Vallgraven-Gamla Göteborg

Cross the channel over to **Västra Hamngatan** street, one of the city's filled-in channels, and you will find yourself between the last two inner city waterways. This part of the city is called **Inom Vallgraven** (within the moat) and is sometimes referred to as Gamla Göteborg (Old Gothenburg). Follow Västra Hamngatan to **Domkyrkan** (the Cathedral), which dates from 1815. Its plain and pale exterior is deceiving; the inside is most impressive with many unusual features. (Västra Hamngatan. Open all year, Mon-Fri, 8 am-8 pm, Sat, 10 am-3 pm. No admission fee.)

A 10-minute walk from Domkyrkan, toward the zigzagging Rosenlunds Kanalen channel, is Göteborg's most famous and probably most visited church, even though in reality it's not a church. This is **Feskekörka** (fish market). In old Gothenburg dialect the name means fisherman's church, and it's a temple for seafood devotées in a building from 1874 that actually looks like a church. (Rosenlundsgatan. Open all year, Tue-Fri, 9 am-5 pm, Sat, 9 am-1 pm. No admission fee.)

Take a stroll along the water to Östra Hamngatan and to **Kungsportsplatsen**, then cross over the bridge toward **Stora Teatern** (the Big Theater), a beautiful building erected in 1859. From there, take a small detour to **Trädgårdsföreningen**, locally called Trädgår'n (the garden), a beautiful park that was established alongside the city moat in the 19th century. Highlights here are a breathtaking rose garden, a butterfly house and, my personal favorite, the tropical and un-Swedish **Palmhuset** (the Palm House) from 1878, with exotic plants, cast iron and glass galore. (Park entrances from Södra Vägen and from Drottningtorget, ☎ 031-611-804. Open daily all year,

Stora Teatern

May-Aug, 7 am-9 pm, Sept-April, daylight-7:30 pm. The Butterfly and Palm houses are open from 10 am-4 pm. General admission SEK 15, Palmhuset additional SEK 20.)

Kungsportsavenyn & Vasastaden

At the Kungsporten square, Östra Hamngatan street changes its name to **Kungsportsavenyn** (locally called just **Avenyn**), a fashionable tree-lined boulevard 50 m (160 feet) wide that is the city's foremost showpiece. This is the place to people-watch and to visit a multitude of shops, cafés, restaurants, pubs and nightclubs, most in a setting of grand old 19th century buildings.

A block off Avenyn in the **Vasastan** district is **Röhsska Museet** (the Röhss Museum of Arts and Crafts), Sweden's only design museum with a collection of some 50,000 objects. Not all of them are on display though. Most of the collections of furniture, tapestries, pottery, books and much more are Swedish and Northern European, but there are also some interesting items from Japan and China, as well as some antique Greek and Roman pieces. Today, the emphasis is on the crafts and industrial design of Sweden and other Nordic countries. (Vasagatan 37-39, ☎ 031-613-850. Open all year, Tue, noon-9 pm, Wed-Sun, noon-5 pm. Admission SEK 40.)

Götaplatsen

Strolling down the entire length of Avenyn, which is almost a mile long, you will end up at **Götaplatsen,** a city square built for the 1923 World Expo; it has a giant Poseidon statue and fountain by Carl Milles at its center. Here you will find Konserthuset (the Concert Hall), Stads Teatern (the municipal theater), and Stadsbiblioteket (the City Library), but the jewel on this square is undisputedly **Konst Museet** (the Art Museum), with one of the world's finest collections of turn-of-the-century Nordic art and works by Carl Larson, Bruno Liljefors, Edvard Munch and Anders Zorn. There is also a decent collection of Impressionists and 20th-century masters. A part of the museum houses the **Hasselblad Center** (the Photographic Center), which features five or six exhibits per year. (☎ 031-612-980. Open all year, Tue and Thurs, 11 am-6 pm, Wed, 11 am-9 pm, Fri-Sun, 11 am-5 pm. Admission SEK 40.)

Not far from Götaplatsen is **Liseberg**, a well-run amusement park that opened its gates in 1923, a long time before the lands of Disney. Today, it is still one of the most popular places to visit in the Göteborg area. Apart from exhilarating rollercoasters, there are also magnificent floral displays in beautiful park settings, lots of live entertainment and many restaurants. Liseberg is open during summer only, except in December when

Liseberg

the park is dressed up with millions of little white lights. In a typically Swedish understated yet fashionable way, it gives visitors a warm welcome during the festive Christmas season. (☎ 031-400-100. Open daily from mid-May to end Aug, mid-May to June, 3-11 pm; July to mid-Aug, noon-11 pm. For additional opening times during Sept and Dec and for ride prices, contact the Tourist Office or the park directly. General admission SEK 50.)

Next door to Liseberg is **Universum**, yet another of the many great attractions in the city. This is a fun-for-all-ages kind of a place, as it is a national science discovery center with everything from Swedish landscapes to rainforests and from live sharks to high-tech hands-on experiments. All of it is housed in a five-story, all-glass building, that in 2000 was voted the most attractive building in Sweden. (Korsvägen, ☎ 031-335-6450. Open all year, Tue-Sun, 11 am-6 pm, Wed, 11 am-8 pm; mid-June to mid-Aug, daily, 9 am-7 pm. Admission SEK 135.)

Haga & Linné

West of the city center, connected to Vasastan and still within comfortable walking distance, is **Haga**. Once the blue collar workers' district of the city, now it is an officially listed cultural area. This 19th-century district of cobbled streets lined with old brick and wooden houses is now a fashionable artists' quarter with cozy cafés, small shops, and art galleries, typical of this type of urban redesignation. The fabulously restored **Haga Badet** spa was built in 1869 as the public bathhouse for the workers in the area. Today, the building is a true Art Deco gem. (Södra Allégatan 3, ☎ 031-600-602. Treatment prices upon request.)

On Haga Nygatan Street there are lots of sidewalk cafés and a real village atmosphere. A little farther west is the district of **Linné**; Linnégatan Street is lined with elegant 19th-century buildings. Göteborg's trendy in-crowds now gather here for shopping and dining.

Other Göteborg Attractions

Auto Collection is Scandinavia's largest collection of sports and racing cars with some 40 cars from 1923 to 2001, all in settings appropriate to their time. (Billdalsvägen 2, Billdal, ☎ 031-680-010. Open all year, daily, June-Aug, 11 am-5 pm; September-May, Sat-Sun, 11 am-5 pm. Admission SEK 60.)

There is more for car buffs – the **Volvo Museum**, where it is possible to follow the Volvo from its beginning in the 1920s to today's cars, trucks and buses. Do not miss the short but well-made movie about the history of Volvo. (Götaverken, Arendal, ☎ 031-664-814. Open all year, Tue-Fri, noon-5 pm, Sat-Sun, 11 am-4 pm. Tram 5, 6 or 10 from the city center. At the Eketradgatan stop, change to Bus 32 and get off at the Götaverken Arendal stop, then follow the signs to "Volvo Museum." Admission SEK 30.)

For mariners, there is **Sjöfartsmuseet & Akvariet** (the Maritime Museum & Aquarium). Often confused with the Maritime Center, this is a place where you can learn a lot about the city's colorful 400-year-old seafaring history and about the marine life of this region. (Karl Johansgatan 1-3, ☎ 031-612-900. Open all year, Tue-Fri, 10 am-4 pm, Wed, 10 am-9 pm, Sat-Sun, 11 am-5 pm; May-Aug, daily, 10 am-5 pm. Admission SEK 40.)

For nature lovers, **Göteborg's Botaniska Trädgård** is Sweden's largest botanical garden, with miles of beautiful walking trails.

■ Shopping

Shopping hours vary, but most Göteborg stores are open Mon-Fri, 9:30 am-7 pm, Sat, 10 am-2 or 4 pm and some stores are open on Sundays, noon-4 pm.

Scandinavia's largest shopping mall is **Nordstan**, with over 150 stores under one roof, many of which offer discounts to bearers of the Göteborg pass.

Shopping Streets

- **Kungsgatan** sells clothes, shoes and everything for the home.
- **Fredsgatan** nearby has several small shopping complexes.
- **Avenyn** is considered to be Göteborg's most fashionable shopping street, with a mix of all types of stores.
- **Linnégatan** is fun to visit, with lots of trendy small shops in a picturesque setting.
- **Västra Hamngatan 6** offers antiques and collectibles in some 30 small shops and stalls.

■ Where to Stay

Göteborg, like Stockholm, is no bargain when it comes to accommodations. Rates are usually lower during the summer months and during weekends all through the year. Most hotels include a Scandinavian breakfast buffet in their rates, and all rates include taxes and service

HOTEL PRICE CHART	
Based on two people in a standard double room, weekday rack rate	
$	Under US$75 (SEK 625)
$$	US$75-150 (SEK 625-1,250)
$$$	US$151-225 (SEK 1,250-1,880)
$$$$	Over US$225 (SEK 1,880)

fees. Some hotels are smoke-free, others offer non-smoking rooms. For additional general information about accommodations in Sweden, see page 6.

> **Tip:** It could also be worth your while to check into Göteborgs Paketet (the Göteborg Package) with the Tourist Offices. The package includes a hotel night and a Göteborg Pass starting at SEK 485 per person.

Gothia Towers, Mässans gata 24, Göteborg. ☎ 031-750-8800, fax 031-750-8882, www. gothiatowers.com. With over 700 rooms, this is Scandinavia's largest hotel, and has one of the city's top restaurants on the 23rd floor. It's a convenient and well-equipped business-class hotel, close to Mässan (the Convention Center) and to Avenyn. The east tower, built in 1984, was recently renovated, and the newer west tower was inaugurated in 2001. 704 rooms, $$$$.

Radisson SAS Park Avenue, Kungsportsavenyn 36-38, Göteborg. ☎ 031-758-4050, fax 031-758-4001, www.radisson.com. This comfortable business-class hotel offers a high level of service right on Avenyn. Ten floors with well-equipped and tastefully decorated rooms. The top floor is designated "executive." Gourmet restaurant, bar and a popular summer veranda facing Avenyn. Sauna, fitness room and solarium. 318 room, $$$$.

Elite Plaza, Västra Hamngatan 3, Göteborg. ☎ 031-720-4000, fax 031-720-4010, www.elite.se. The hotel opened in 2000 and is situated in a building dating back to 1889, which was the former headquarters of an old insurance company. This is probably the most beautiful hotel in Göteborg, with a mix of classic and contemporary design. Original stucco ceilings and mosaic floors have been preserved and blend nicely with the modern art on the walls. Tastefully decorated mid-size to spacious rooms with high-tech details. High-level service. Sauna and gym. 139 rooms, $$$.

Hotel Opera, Norra Hamngatan 38, Göteborg. ☎ 031-805-080, fax 031-805-817, www.hotelopera.se. A well-run "two-made-into-one" hotel, located on Drottningtorget close to Centralen, this family-owned and -op-

erated hotel offers standard and budget rooms. Restaurant and bar. Jacuzzi, sauna and solarium. 145 rooms, $$$.

Hotel Eggers, Drottningtorget, Göteborg. ☎ 31-806-070, fax 031-154-243, www.best-western.se. One of the oldest hotels in Sweden, Eggers has a great location right on the Drottningtorget square close to Centralen. It was originally built in 1859 as the railway hotel. During the last total renovation in 2002, much effort was put into saving the marble floors, Greek-style pillars in the lobby, and a magnificent crystal chandelier. Lots of old fashioned charm. Comfortable, individually decorated rooms, some with antique furniture. 67 rooms, one with a ghost, $$.

Hotel Excelsior, Karl Gustavsgatan 7, Göteborg. ☎ 031-175-435, fax 031-175-439, www.hotelexcelsior.nu. The building dates back to 1880 and is surrounded by classic stone houses. Excelsior got its name when it was turned into a hotel in 1938. Both Greta Garbo and Ingrid Bergman have stayed here. There is lots of charm in an old-fashioned English style and many attractive old Swedish *kakelugnar* (porcelain stoves) still remain. All of the newly renovated rooms are smoke-free. Some older rooms are classified as budget, with lower rates. The restaurant is in the old cellar and, during summer, outdoor seating and eating are available in the charming backyard. 66 rooms, $$.

Hotel Royal, Drottninggatan 67, Göteborg. ☎ 031-700-1170, fax 031-700-1179, www.hotel-royal.com. Built in 1852, this is oldest hotel in Goteborg. A classic hotel with yesteryear's charm. Lobby with a magnificent painted glass ceiling and a beautiful wrought iron banister and unique bronze lamps. All rooms differ in size and décor. Privately owned since 1980. 82 rooms, $$.

Victors Hotel, Skeppsbroplatsen, Göteborg. ☎ 031-174-180, fax 031-139-610, www.victors-hotel.com. A small, cozy boutique hotel with spacious and nicely decorated rooms. The restaurant on the fourth floor has a brilliant harbor view. Sauna. 44 rooms, $$.

Hotel Vanilj, Kyrkogatan 38, Göteborg. ☎ 031-711-6220, fax 031-711-6230, www.vanilj-hotel.se. A great little budget hotel and café situated in a historic building from 1865. Family-owned and -operated. All rooms individually decorated and each has a name instead of a room number. In summer, weather permitting, breakfast is served in the garden. 25 rooms, $$.

Hotel Vasa, Victoriagatan 6, Göteborg. ☎ 031-173-630, fax 031-711-9597, www.hotelvasa.se. A small, friendly, family-owned and -operated hotel with a great location. The turn-of-the-century building was totally renovated in 2001. Courtyard, sauna and mini-gym. 48 rooms, $$.

Barken Viking, Gullbergskajen, Göteborg. ☎ 031-635-800, fax 031-150-058, www.liseberg.se. For a nautical feel, spend a night or two on board an old four-masted bark. *Barken Viking* was built in Denmark in 1906 and, after an adventuresome and checkered past, became a hotel in 1998, operated by the Liseberg company. Stay in the officers' cabins or in the smaller but less expensive crew quarters. Note, the crew quarters have shared shower and toilet facilities in the corridors. *Barken Viking* is moored in the Lilla Bommen area, close to the Opera House. 52 cabins/rooms, $.

Hostels

STF Slottskogens Vandrarhem, Vegagatan 21, Göteborg. ☎ 031-426-520, fax 031-142-102, www.hostel.nu. Voted Sweden's best hostel in 2003, this is a popular place with a great location in the Linné district. It offers everything from single rooms to just a bed in a dormitory-style room. Access to a community kitchen. Breakfast buffet available for an additional cost of SEK 55. Also available at additional cost: TV, sauna, solarium and bicycle rental. Open all year. 165 beds, $.

STF Stigbergsliden Vandrarhem, Stigbergsliden 10, Göteborg. ☎ 031-241-620, fax 031-246-520, www.hostel-gothenburg.com. The historic building has an interesting past and was built in 1854 as a Seaman's House. It has been a hostel since 1996. There are plenty of showers and toilets are close to the rooms. A big breakfast buffet is served daily for an additional cost of SEK 45. Bicycle rental. Open all year. 90 beds, $.

■ Restaurants & Cafés

Always in tough but friendly competition with Stockholm, there is a contest where Göteborg is about to beat its arch-rival. Göteborg is fast becoming the gastronomic capital of Sweden with its dense concentration of restaurants and cafés. In six of the last eight years, the

DINING PRICE CHART	
Based on the price of a main course for dinner	
$	Under US$15 (SEK 125)
$$	US$15-30 (SEK 125-250)
$$$	US$31-45 (SEK 251-375)
$$$$	Over US$45 (SEK 375)

"Swedish Chef of the Year" has come from the Göteborg area. Fish and seafood being a speciality, the yearly highlight is the lobster season, which begins at the end of September and continues until April. There is lots of great seafood available during the summer months as well. There is a multitude of eating establishments throughout the city, serving everything from high-priced gourmet to Swedish home cooking and from open-faced sandwiches to exotic Thai.

28+, Götabergsgatan 28, ☎ 031-202-161. This is one of the three *Guide Rouge* star-awarded restaurants in Göteborg. 28+ offers specially created seasonal menus and, if cost is not an issue, why not order one? An example is the *Fiskdegustationsmenyn* (a menu with all kinds of fish dishes), preferably accompanied by the *Vinmeny* or wine menu. All are served in a very attractive cellar setting with wooden tables, white stone walls, vaulted ceilings, and plenty of candlelight. $$$.

Fond, Götaplatsen, ☎ 031-812-580. The conservatory-styled Fond is the newest of the *Guide Rouge* star additions in the city, featuring a fabulous "Taste of Sweden" menu that includes an unequaled akvavit-smoked salmon. Try anything from the à la carte menu; no one leaves Fond disappointed. The interior design is Scandinavian modern. $$$.

Heaven 23, Mässans gata 24, ☎ 031-750-8833, is Hotel Gothia's most famous restaurant and bar. Set on the 23rd floor with a breathtaking view over all of Göteborg and its harbors, the décor is urban-cool. The menu is international and the food freshly prepared. The talk of town these days is the new panorama elevator, all in glass, which takes restaurant guests from ground level to the 23rd floor – 64 m (210 feet) – in 30 seconds. Restaurant menu $$$, bar menu $$.

Hos Pelle, Djupedalsgatan 2, ☎ 031-121-031. This well-established, classy neighborhood restaurant and wine bar has received several awards for its environmentally friendly operation. The food is outstanding and the art exhibits by local Göteborg painters and sculptors makes the décor ever-changing. Open 6 pm-midnight. Restaurant $$$, bar menu $$.

Sjömagasinet, Klippans Kulturreservat, ☎ 031-775-5920. This waterfront restaurant, set in a 200-year-old tastefully renovated warehouse, is a personal favorite. The combination of great views, interesting history, unbeatable seafood, and outstanding service leaves no doubt as to why it has been awarded a *Guide Rouge* star. Most customers think Sjömagasinet deserves two stars. $$$.

Brasserie Lipp, Kungsportsavenyn 8, ☎ 031-105-830. Since the day it opened its doors in 1986, this French-style brasserie with its well-stocked bar has been a hit with the locals. Situated right on Avenyn with a large outdoor seating area during summer. $$.

Cyrano, Prinsgatan 7, ☎ 031-143-110. A personal favorite, this cozy Provençal-style bistro oozes friendly and laid-back atmosphere and serves good food. A taste of Provençe at its best. $$.

Eggers Restaurant, Drottningtorget, ☎ 031-802-540. In historic Eggers Hotel, personal service and good food can be enjoyed in an authentic old-world setting. Enjoy a tasty Swedish dish in a room adorned with gilt leather wallpaper and crystal chandeliers. $$.

Linnés Trädgård, Linnégaan 38, ☎ 031-141-232. A stylish corner restaurant and a popular meeting place, Linnés serves fish, meat and excellent pasta dishes. A place to see and be seen. $$.

Palace, Brunnsparken, ☎ 031-807-550. The Palace building dates back to 1752, when it was built as a sugar factory. It then became a private residence, followed by a stint as an art museum and then a hotel. It is now a fine restaurant with a popular summer veranda. $$.

Smaka, Vasaplatsen 3, ☎ 031-132-247. Reasonably priced traditional Swedish cooking in a cool blue setting. A popular after-dinner hangout for the younger set. Open 5 pm-1am. $$.

Tvåkanten, Kungsportsavenyn 27, ☎ 031-182-115. A soothing and attractive interior in soft pastels and gold is one of the three advantages of this trendy restaurant. The second is the excellent traditional Swedish food, but with an innovative flair, combined with an excellent wine list. The third advantage is the location, right on Avenyn. $$.

Fröken Olssons Café, Östra Larmgatan 14, ☎ 031-138-193. Just a couple of blocks from Avenyn, this is a place for lighter meals like sandwiches, salads and hot pies, served in a cozy atmosphere. Do not miss the sumptuous desserts. No alcoholic beverages served. $.

Gabriel, Feskekörka, ☎ 031-139-051. Set in the city's famous fish market hall, Feskekörka, Gabriel is open for lunch, 11 am-5 pm, and is an excellent place to sample the freshest of seafood at reasonable prices. Try a bowl of Fishsoup Gabriel or a heap of peel-your-own west coast shrimp. $.

Jacobs Café, Haga Nygatan 10, ☎ 031-711-8044, offers excellent open-faced sandwiches and huge bagels in a dark, cozy and pretty setting. Note the Swedish Art Nouveau Jugend lamps. In the summertime it has a large outdoor seating area. $.

Mykonos, Linnegatan 38, ☎ 031-145-770 – for a taste of the Greek Islands combined with Mediteranean personal service and reasonable prices. $.

Thai Orchid, Odinsgatan 11, ☎ 031-151-210. A friendly Thai restaurant with well-prepared food and unbeatable prices. Do not miss the excellent Sunday Brunch Buffet served from 1 to 7 pm. $.

Warehouse, Götgatan 14-16, Nordstan, ☎ 031-806-670. If you get homesick, this American-style restaurant serves steaks, burgers, ribs and Tex-Mex fare at reasonable prices. $.

Internet Cafés

Game Net, Victoriagatan 22, ☎ 031-711-9016.

IT-Palatset Janemans, Viktoriagatan 14, ☎ 031-133-113.

Gameonline AB, Magasingatan 26, ☎ 031-135-171.

IT Grottan Internetcafé, Chalmersgatan 27, ☎ 031-773-7377.

■ Göteborg Nightlife

For its size, Göteborg has an amazing number of choices for nightlife, especially in the summer, when the whole city seems transformed into a giant outdoor bar and restaurant. After dinner, the opportunities are endless for those who like to go clubbing or just enjoy a quiet drink in a cozy bar. Then there is the international casino, and, of course, Liseberg, the amusement park. The main entertainment areas are Avenyn, Vasastan and Linné but, wherever you end up, chances are you will find a bar, a restaurant or a café.

Bars, Music Bars, Pubs & Nightclubs

Bishop Arms, Västra Hamngatan 3. This cozy pub in the cellar of Elite Plaza Hotel is a meeting and mingling place for locals and visitors, offering over 50 different brands of beer and whiskey. There is definitely a touch of England in this place (a portrait of Queen Elizabeth hangs over the fireplace).

Bubbles, Kungsportsavenyn 8, on Avenyn, is a small, intimate club with a 30-something clientele. A popular late-night mingling spot.

Casino Cosmopol, Packhuskajen 7, Lilla Bommen. Set in former Stora Tullhuset (the Customs House), a beautiful building dating back to 1866, Casino Cosmopol has changed it into an entertainment venue with three restaurants, bars and an international casino, with 26 table games and 204 slot machines. Minimum age 20.

Dancin' Dingo, Kristinelundsgatan 16, off Avenyn, an Australian-owned restaurant and bar, is a popular night spot with affordable beer and great Aussie-size steaks and burgers. Expect long lines on weekend nights.

Nefertiti, Hvittfeldtsplatsen 6. A trendy club for lovers of jazz, big band, reggae, blues and soul, and often live entertainment. Be prepared for long lines.

Nivå, Kungsportsavenyn 9, on Avenyn. A great party place with a stylish interior and many floors where locals come to dance or just to enjoy the

music with a cool drink. A rooftop terrace is open during summer. Happy hour weekdays, 4-7 pm.

Oakley's Country Club, Långgatan 16, Linné district. A happening, American saloon-style restaurant and nightspot set in a striking former fire station building. Burgers, T-bones mix with Nouvelle American cuisine and singing waiters and waitresses. There's an elegant brandy and cigar room, too.

Palace, Södra Hamngatan 2, Brunnsparken. A spacious and popular nightclub and casino set in the beautiful building that also houses the restaurant with the same name. See *Restaurants* page 181.

Park Lane, Kungsportsavenyn 36, on Avenyn. Expensive drinks, dinner, dancing, live entertainment and a casino. Many international big-name stars have performed here. It's a popular place among the locals.

The Bookmaker, Nils Ericsonsgatan 23, Inside Vallgraven. Yes, you guessed it. You can place your bets here, and enjoy food, drinks, televised football and casino games.

The Dubliner, Kungsgatan 8, an Irish pub, is popular and crowded on weekends when there is a cover charge at the door.

The Rover, Långgatan 12, Linné district. Famous for its many beers and a good selection of whiskey. There is also a limited menu, but the main reason to visit this place is beer.

Tradgår'n, Nya Allén, Lorensberg. The large building looks a bit like a lumber yard, but this is one of the most popular nightclubs and the largest one in Göteborg. The laser light system and the food are much talked about, and rightfully so. The nightclub stays open until 5 am on weekends. Minimum age 25.

The Gay Scene

For such a large city in gay-friendly Sweden, there is little going on here. Pick up a copy of *QX* magazine at any of the larger newsstands for the latest news; it's published in Swedish and English.

Gretas Bar, Drottninggatan 35, is a friendly bar, club and restaurant open Mon-Sat from 5 pm. The clientele is of mixed ages and sexual orientations – straights, gays and lesbians – with décor and a menu as varied as the clientele.

Matahari, Drottninggatan 35. Nightclub open Fri-Sat 10 pm-3 am, sometimes featuring live entertainment. Next door to Gretas.

ZapphoBar, Olof Palmes Plats 1, in Restaurang Trappan. For lesbians only. Open the last Friday or Saturday every month.

■ The Waters of Göteborg

Along the Waterfront

So much about Göteborg is about water, so to get a better feel of this harbor city, take a walk or a bike ride along the waterfront of the Göta Älv River. A great starting point is the **Klippan** district, which was already an important area in the 14th century when a fortress was constructed here to protect Sweden from invaders. Today, only ruins remain. The old fortress was replaced by Nya Elfsborgs Fästning (New Elfsborgs Fortress) in the 17th century. In 1731, Swedish East India Company's first ship sailed from here. There were a total of 132 expeditions over the next 74 years, each lasting about a year and a half. When the ships came back with their treasures of exotic spices, porcelain, tea and more, the treasures were unloaded here before being taken to the city to be auctioned off.

Today, one of the the main warehouses where the luxury goods were stored upon arrival, is, after an amazing three-year restoration project in the 1980s, one of Göteborg's best eating establishments, **Restaurang Sjömagasinet**. If a lunch break is too costly there, visit **Konstkaféet i Klippan** (the Art Café) on Banehagsgatan 15. The little café is famous for its art exhibitions, and is good for a light lunch or a cup of coffee. The view from here is astounding. You can see Älvsborgsbron (the Älvsborg Bridge), the harbor with ships passing by, and across the river Terra Nova, where *Ostindienfararen Götheborg-East Indiaman* is being built.

Continuing north along the quays, you will pass the Stena Line terminal where the ferries leave for Germany. A bit farther on is **Fiskehamnen** (the fishing harbor), where lively fish auctions were held every morning. Today, there are still fish auctions, but only Tues-Friday mornings. Close by is **Sjöfartsmuseet** (the Maritime Museum), see page 176. Next to the museum stands a monument built in memory of the sailors who died during WWI. On top of this tower stands a statue of a woman, a sailor's wife looking out to sea. On the bottom part of the tower you can read all the names of the sailors and the ships who never made it back.

As you continue on by the cruise ship quay, take a moment and send a thought to the nearly one million Swedes who made their way to America in the old days. Most of them sailed from Göteborg and this was the last they saw of their homeland.

The next large terminal is Stena Lines departure point for Denmark. After passing the Skeppsbron bridge, you will come to the part of the waterfront called Lilla Bommen (see page 171). **Nya Elfsborgs Fästning** (Elfsborgs Fortress) is a dramatic fortress constructed in 1670 to protect Göteborg from the Danes. It stands atop an island at the entrance of the harbor. It was attacked many times, but stood strong. After the peace

agreement with Denmark was signed in 1720, it started to decline, but was used as a prison. The surviving buildings have now been turned into a museum and café. There is a guided boat trip and a tour at the fortress with daily departures from Klippan all year and from Lilla Bommen during summer. Admission to the fortress is SEK 95.

Ostindienfararen Götheborg-East Indiaman. The Swedish East India Company is building a full-scale, 50-m (150 feet) long and 11-m (33 feet) wide, replica of an 18th-century ship that sank in Göteborg harbor in 1745, after a 30-month voyage to China. It is planned that it will set sail in October 2005 to re-create the original route. The shipyard is open for visitors, with exhibits, shops, and a restaurant. Daily departures from Klippan all year and from Lilla Bommen during summer. Admission at the Ostindiaenfararen Terra Nova ship yard SEK 80-120. Guided tours in English 2 pm daily.

Island-Hopping

Göteborg's own little archipelago consists of about 100 islands and islets, and many of the larger ones are still very much alive with some 17,000 permanent residents. During the summer months, the islands get busy with mainlanders visiting their beloved summer cottages, boaters anchoring near the islands, and the many day-trippers. While in the Göteborg area, try to take the time to visit at least one of the islands. The southern part of this archipelago belongs to Göteborg municipality, and no cars are allowed on any of the islands. The northern part, the Öckero islands belong to their own municipality and are accessible by car via ferries.

For a one-day outing, take a boat trip to **Vinga**, in the southern archipelago. It is the westernmost island, with a famous lighthouse and what many consider to be the best beaches in the west coast area. Or take a trip to **Hönö**, one of the Öckero islands, and stay for a couple of days. Hönö has accommodations, bicycle rentals, many beaches and an interesting history. Do not miss the mysterious ancient labyrinth (maze) in Jungfruviken.

LABYRINTHS

Labyrinths have been constructed all over the world, from ancient Egypt to India and Peru. True labyrinths have no false paths or deadends to confuse the explorer. Instead, they consist of a single meandering pathway that leads from an entrance to the center, and sometimes back out again. Their origins and significance are still unknown. No other country has as many labyrinths as Sweden, some 500 in all. Most are laid out on the shore with water-worn stones, though some are found in churches.

To reach the southern part of the Gothenburg archipelago, take tram 11 to Saltholmen, from where several boats leave for the islands. There are additional excursion boats to Vinga Island during high season (end June to mid-Aug), departing from Lilla Bommen. The northern archipelago can be reached by car via Highway 155; follow Hising/Öckero signs that will take you to the car ferry. Or take a bus from the Nils Ericsson terminal to the ferry terminal at Lilla Varholmen.

Canoe & Kayak Rental

If you want to get a close-up look at the southern or northern Gothenburg archipelago, rent a kayak or canoe at one of the places listed here.

Delsjön, Näsets Paddlarklubb, ☎ 031-403-488.

Escape Kajakcenter, Önnereds Brygga, ☎ 031-691-950.

Långedrags Kajakuthyrning, Osbergsgatan 11, ☎ 031-297-876.

Styrsö Havskajaker, Furufjällsvagen 13, ☎ 031-0702-775-190.

For additional information contact the Göteborg Tourist Offices.

Västkusten

Long before the Swedes ventured off to Spain and Greece, then to Florida and Hawaii, for their sun and beach vacations, Västkusten was their dream vacation destination. It remains popular even today. In the province of Halland, the shoreline is soft and undramatic, with rocks that are smooth and worn. It is dotted with sandy beaches, meadows, golf courses, and flat bicycle-friendly roads. The province of Bohuslän, by con-

trast, is rugged and dramatic, with craggy granite rocks along the shore and rocky islands just off the coast. The two types of landscape are strikingly different, but the provinces share a similar history. There are many small resort towns and fishing villages in close proximity to each other, good accommodations, fabulous seafood, and a 350-km (218-mile) stretch of beautiful coast for all types of outdoor adventures. Whether you're interested in bicycling, hiking, sailing, kayaking, golf, diving, fishing or cultural adventures, everything is within a few miles. Let's start in Göteborg and go south to Halland, where we will follow more or less the same route as the Ginstleden bicycle track. Then, we'll go north from Göteborg, mostly following the interesting Cykelspåret bicycle track through the length of Bohuslän and some of its islands. Göteborg's official start or end point for both of these is the Järntorget square, in the city center. In either direction the tracks are well marked. The West Coast adventures can easily be divided into parts and it does not matter whether you start in the north, the south or in the middle.

■ Getting Here & Getting Around

Göteborg is a good starting point, as the distances between the many coastal towns and villages are short and the choices of transportation many. Whether traveling by bus, train, rental car, bike, boat, ferry or kayak, choose a place or two along the coast or on the islands, to use as a "home base" for leisurely day trips.

Bicycle Trails

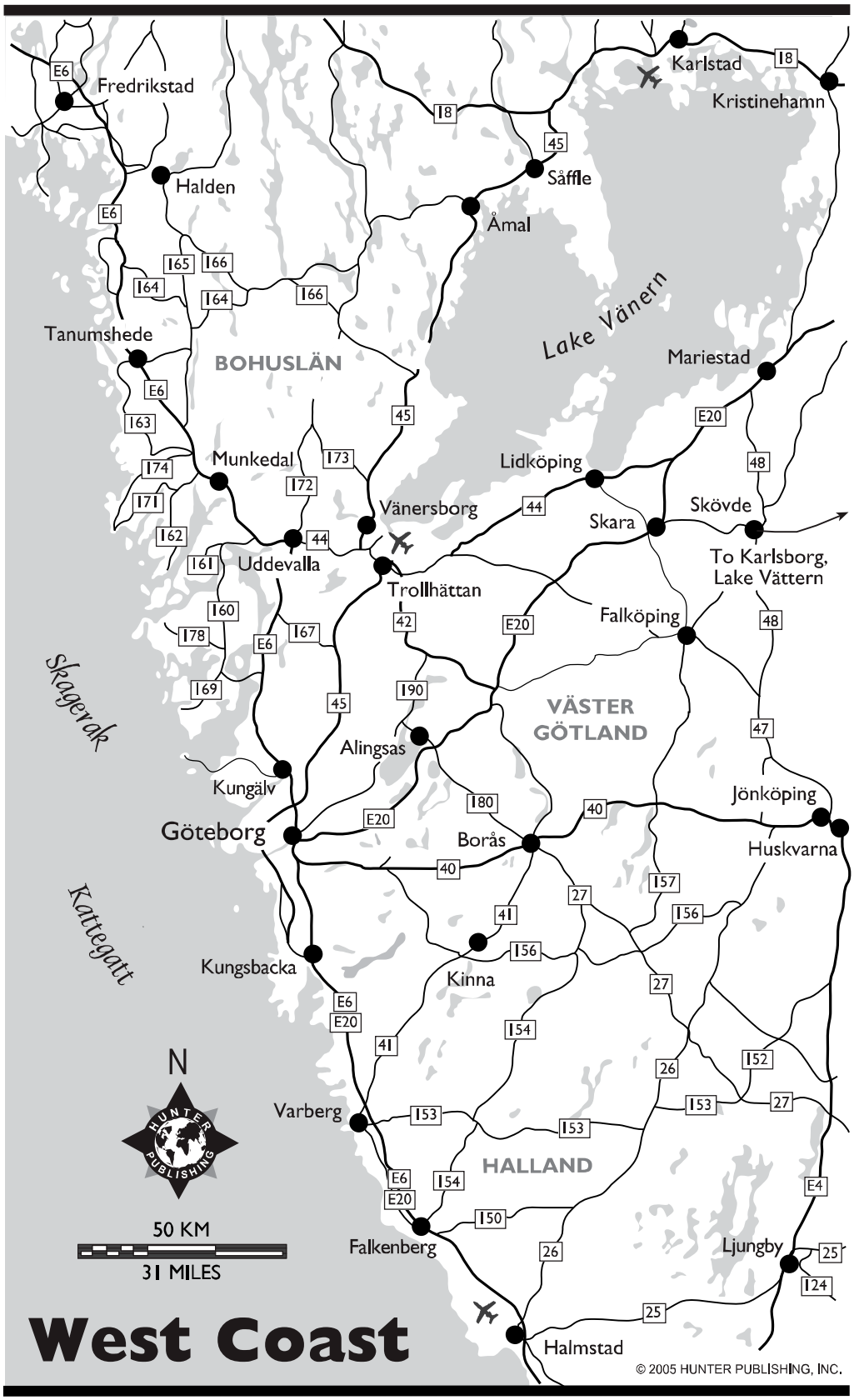
Ginstleden, Göteborg-Båstad – 205 km, (127 miles). Contact: Halland Turism, Box 6830103, Halmstad, ☎ 035-109-560, fax 035-121-237, www.halland.turist.se.

Cykelspåret, Göteborg Strömstad – 290 km (180 miles). Contact: Västsvenska Turistrådet, Kungsportsavenyn 31-3541136 Göteborg, ☎ 031-818-300, fax 031-818-301.

The Coastal North Sea Cycle Route – total length 6,000 km (3,728 miles). Starting (or ending) in southern Holland, it goes through Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Scotland, and England. The Swedish part, Varberg-Strömstad, is 396 km (246 miles). See www.northsea-cycle.com for details.

■ The Province of Halland

Heading south, leaving lively Göteborg behind, you will soon reach the laid-back province of Halland, with mile after mile of sandy beaches, rivers teeming with fish, great golf, and charming coastal resort towns. The province offers a beautiful and varied landscape, and is perfect for bicycling. It is a windsurfer's paradise with even winds and shallow waters close to the long beaches. **Apelviken** is internationally known as one of


Karlstad
Kristinehamn
Fredrikstad
Halden
Såffle
Åmal
Lake Vänern
Tanumshede
BOHUSLÄN
Mariestad
Munkedal
Lidköping
Skövde
Skara
Vänersborg
To Karlsborg,
Lake Vättern
Uddevalla
Trollhättan
Falköping
Skagerak
VÄSTER
GÖTLAND
Alingsas
Kungälv
Jönköping
Göteborg
Borås
Huskvarna
Kattegatt
Kungsbacka
Kinna
N
HUNTER PUBLISHING
Varberg
HALLAND
50 KM
31 MILES
Falkenberg
Ljungby
Halmstad
West Coast
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the best beaches. Halland is also a favored place for golfers, as it has the highest golf-course density in Sweden, with a total of some 30 evenly spread out courses to play during a long season. Who knows whether it is the sea, the air, or the mild climate, but this is the Swedish province where people take the fewest sick-days and where both men and women live the longest.

Tourist Information

Halland Turism (Halland Tourism), Box 6830103, Halmstad, ☎ 035-109-560, fax 035-121-237, www.halland.turist.se.

ABOUT THE TOURIST OFFICES

Opening hours for the tourist offices keep changing, but as a rule of thumb the offices in the towns and cities are open year-round, Mon-Fri, 9 am to 5 pm, Sat, 10 am to 2 pm. During the high season in summer, the hours are usually extended. Most of the tourist information centers in the smaller resort towns and villages are usually only open during the summer season. The local tourist offices will assist with bicycle and kayak rental, fishing permits, accommodations and much more.

Kungsbacka

The first town on this route is Kungsbacka, which was established in the 13th century and is considered by many today as a suburb of Göteborg. It is only 30 km (18 miles) away, but the town has always had its own identity. Like most older towns with wooden buildings, it has been ravaged by many fires, as well as by many wars. Only two original houses are still standing from old Kungsbacka; the rest of the buildings are 150 years old or younger.

Tourist Information

Kungsbacka Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), Storgatan 41434 32, Kungsbacka, ☎ 0300-834-595, www.kungsbacka.se/turism.

Sightseeing

More interesting than Kungsbacka itself is **Fjärås Bräcka** (the Fjärås Crack) just west of town. It is a ridge running parallel with the coast and definitely merits a detour. It was formed by glaciers during and after the ice age, and today is an outdoor museum with grave-mounds from the iron age and over 100 impressive monoliths spread out over a large field.

South of Kungsbacka is the not-to-be-missed **Tjolöholms Slott** (Tjolöholms Castle). It is a magnificent turn-of-the-century English Tu-

Tjolöholms Slott

dor-style mansion built by James Fredrik Dickson, an eccentric Göteborg merchant and heir of one of the Scottish founders of the Swedish East India Company. Unfortunately, Mr. Dickson never got to see his castle, as he died shortly after the construction had started. His wife, Blanche, who was also his cousin, took over, struggling with architects and builders and, after six years, the masterpiece was inaugurated in 1904. The interior is attractive, all in Art Nouveau style. The castle and its church are definitely worth a visit, and so are the grounds, with their manicured gardens, pretty woods, and nearby beach.

Varberg

Forty km (25 miles) farther south, after passing the fishing villages of Våröbacka and Bua (whose original charm is diminished by a nearby nuclear power plant) lies Varberg. This charming little town has been a popular resort for the past 200 years. There is a busy port with direct ferry connection to Grenå in Denmark, and it is the Swedish starting point for the famous 6,000-km (3,728-mile) Coastal North Sea Cycle Route.

Tourist Information

Varbergs Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), Brunnsparken432 44, Varberg, ☎ 0340-887-70, www.turist.varberg.se.

Sightseeing - In Town

Varberg is known for the late 19th-century **Societetshuset**, gracefully aged buildings with Moorish influences being used today as a restaurant and art gallery. All over the Västkusten you will come across these old, beautiful, ornate buildings. Most of them were built during the second half of the 19th century for wealthy spa visitors so they would have some nice places to meet, socialize, dance, and go for strolls in the pretty tree-shaded parks nearby. Varberg is better known for its 13th-century moated fortress, **Varbergs Fästning**, which is set on a rocky hill. It was later turned into a prison, then a distillery. Today, it is a museum, with its old prison/distillery converted to a hostel. It also contains a popular outdoor summer café.

Where to Stay

Varbergs Kurort Hotell & Spa, Nils Kreugers väg 5, Apelviken, 43224 Varberg, ☎ 0340-629-800, www.varbergskurort.se. With a beautiful location by the Apelvikenstranden beach, this old sanatorium-turned-hotel is the place to stay for some real pampering. The rooms are decorated in classic style. The best part is the spa, with all imaginable facilities. Restaurant and pub. 106 rooms, $$$.

Strandgården, Valvikavägen 14, Getterön, 43293 Varberg, ☎ 0340-168-55, www.turist.varberg.se/strandgarden. This small, cozy, family-owned and -operated hotel is situated on the Getterön Peninsula just outside Varberg. It offers friendly service and comfortable rooms, some with kitchenettes. Restaurants and mini-market. Close to the beach. 20 rooms, $$.

Vandrarhemmet Fästningen (hostel), Varbergs Fästning, 43244 Varberg, ☎ 0340-887-88, fax 0340-627-000, www.turist.varberg.se/vandrarhem. Set within the walls of the historic fortress, the "rooms" are the former prison cells. It's a clean and popular hostel, so book well in advance. 74 beds, $.

Where to Eat

Harrys Restaurant & Pub, Kungsgatan 18. A popular English-style pub and restaurant, part of a franchise chain, serving lunch and dinner. Good selection of beers and whiskies. Situated in the center of town on a street dotted with eateries. Outdoor seating during the summer months.

Oscars Bar and Nattklubb, Borgmästaregatan 15. A restaurant, nightclub and disco situated in Hotel Varberg in the center of town. International menu. Outdoor seating during summer.

Sightseeing – Out of Town

From Varberg, a 30-km (19-mile) inland detour to **Ullared** via Road 153 could be worth your while. This place is famous all over Sweden for bargain shopping, with an astounding three million shoppers a year browsing the huge outlet stores. On the way there, make a turnoff in Torstorp toward the Grimeton golf course, then follow the signs to **Bexells Talande Stenar** (Bexells Talking Stones). This unique place, set deep in a beech forest, contains about 150 stones, boulders and cliff walls engraved with proverbs, names of places, and people. It is the work of Alfred Bexell, who was born in this area in 1831. He was a colorful personality who started out as a military man, then became a wealthy farmer and also a politician. Why he had all these inscriptions made no one knows for sure; some say he wanted to preserve the Swedish language while others say that he wanted to give jobs to stone masons who had drinking problems.

In & Around the Water

There are many beaches around town. One of the best is **Lilla Apelviken**, a small sandy beach. There are also many nudist beaches along the coast, such as **Goda Hopp** for men and **Kärringhålan** for women, which are next to each other and close to town.

Falkenberg

After the detours and getting back to the coast again, at a distance of about 100 km (62 miles) from Göteborg, the next town is the charming, medieval Falkenberg, situated on the salmon-filled River Ätran. British tourists found their way here to fish as early as the 1830s. The best part of town is Gamla Stan (the Old Town) on the west side of the river.

Tourist Information

Falkenberg Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), Holgersgatan 11311 35, Falkenberg, ☎ 0346-886-100, fax 0346-145-26.

Sightseeing

Amidst a dense network of cobblestone streets and old wooden houses stands **St Laurentii Kyrka**, a church in which the oldest parts date back to the 12th century. For a few years at the turn of the century it was used as a theater, a gym, and even a shooting range! For photo buffs, a visit to **Fotomuseum Olympia** is recommended.

There are good fishing spots around **Tullbron** (the Toll Bridge), a magnificent little stone bridge from 1756. The fishing season runs from March to September. Permits and rods are available at the Tourist Office.

Törngrens Krukmakeri is one of the oldest pottery-makers in Scandinavia and has been in the same workshop and in the same family for seven generations. When it started in 1789, Falkenberg was a very important pottery town, with over 20 workshops. The only one left from that time is Törngrens.

Strolling in the city, you will also notice the many somewhat unusual sculptures. **Doktorspromenaden**, from 1861, is a great place for an early morning walk. A local physician created this marvelous path to encourage the town people to move about for their health.

Just south of town is a four-km (2½-mile) stretch of sandy beach called **Skrea Strand** (Skrea Beach) where the best part is the secluded coves found at the southern end.

Where to Stay

Elite Hotel Strandbaden, Havsbadsallén, 31142 Falkenberg, ☎ 0346-714-900, fax 0340-161-11,www.elite.se, is a modern hotel with a perfect location right on Skrea Strand, one of the best

beaches in Sweden, and not far from the city center. Comfortable rooms with all amenities. Restaurant. Gym, sauna, sun room and pool. 135 rooms, $$.

Värdshuset Hwitan, Storgatan 24, 31121 Falkenberg, ☎ 0346-820-90, www.hwitan.se. A charming inn and a member of Romantik Hotels, nicely situated in the center of Falkenberg, right on the Ätran river. The inn was built in 1703. The two wings and gardens were added in 1924. Tastefully decorated rooms. Restaurant and pub. Frequent music events in the garden during summer. 32 rooms, $$.

Falkenbergs Vandrarhem (hostel), Hansagårdsvägen, 31143 Falkenberg, ☎ 0346-886-100, www.falkenbergsturist.se/fbgvandrarhem. This is a cozy hostel within walking distance of the Skrea Strand beach. Terrace overlooking the ocean. Breakfast available during high season at an extra charge. 40 beds, $.

Where to Eat

Restaurang Gustav Bratt, Brogatan 1, is a restaurant and nightclub located in a beautiful old building, a former grain storage facility from 1861. It's situated next to the Tullbron Bridge with a great water view. The restaurant serves good food and the service is friendly.

Värdshuset Hwitan, Storgatan 24, has wonderful food and features fabulous music at night in the pretty garden.

Halmstad

Forty km (25 miles) south of Falkenberg lies Halmstad. It is situated on the River Nissan and is the largest city as well as the county seat of Halland province. With some 70,000 inhabitants, Halmstad is the largest seaside resort on the West Coast and is also the self-proclaimed Golf Capital of Sweden, with seven courses. The town's people are proud of their culture and long history, but little of its early history remains to be visited. The nearby resort of Tylösand is its most current source of pride.

Tourist Information

Halmstad Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), Halmstads Slott 301 02, Halmstad, ☎ 035-122-320, fax 035-158-115, www.halmstad.se/turist.

Sightseeing – In Town

The only part of a 17th-century city wall that remains standing is one of the town gates, **Norre Port**. Another noteworthy early structure is **St. Nicolai Kyrkan**, a church whose history is somewhat obscure, but which probably dates back to back to the 13th or 14th century.

Around **Stora Torget**, the main square, are some buildings from the 19th century, and on the square is a noteworthy fountain by Carl Milles. It features a sculpture of *Europa and the Bull.* Storgata is a charming pedestrian and restaurant street lined with some old houses. One of the newer sights is **Martin Luther Kyrkan** on Långatan, a most unusual church built in the 1970s entirely out of steel, with a shiny outside and a rusty inside. The beautiful 17th-century **Halmstad Castle** is now the residence of the county governor and is not open to the public. Nearby, a small, rigged sailing-ship named ***Najaden*** is moored. She was built in 1897 and is a former training ship for the Swedish Navy. The Castle, along with *Najaden* in the foreground, have become the symbols of Halmstad.

Halmstad Museum houses various exhibits. The most interesting are the displays of home interiors from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. On the top floor of the museum, works by the Halmstads Gruppen painters can be seen.

Where to Stay

Hotel Tylösand, Tylöhusvägen, Tylösand, 30116 Halmstad, ☎ 035-305-00, fax 035-324-39, www.tylosand/se. Nine km from downtown Halmstad and right on the ocean, this is one of the best beach resorts on Västkusten. The hotel has first-class rooms, a great restaurant and a pub. Spa with pool, Jacuzzis, gym and all kinds of spa treatments. 230 rooms, $$$.

Hotel Strangården Tylösand, Tylöhusvägen 21, 30273 Halmstad, ☎ 035-307-45, fax 035-30745. A small and reasonably priced hotel. This family-owned and -operated hotel is located between a golf-course and the beach, right in the village of Tylösand. Walking distance to restaurants and nightclubs. 21 rooms, $$.

Halmstad Vandrarhem (hostel), Skepparegatan 23, 30105 Halmstad, ☎ 035-120-500, www.hallonstenturist.se. In the center of Halmstad, this rather large hostel is popular. 134 beds, $.

Where to Eat

Fiskekrogen Klosterköket, Klammerdammsgatan 21. This is without a doubt the best seafood restaurant in town, featuring well-prepared dishes using the freshest catch. Indoor and outdoor seating.

Restaurang SALT, Tylösand Beach. A new and unique restaurant set on the southern part of the beach, just a few feet from the water's edge. The innovative chef, Daniel Isberg, blends Asian, Mediterranean and Swedish cuisine to perfection.

Sightseeing – Out of Town

To see the best works of the Halmstads Gruppen artists, you have to travel five km (three miles) north of the town center to **Mjellby Konstgård** (Mjellby Art Centre) in the village of Mjällby (Mjellby is the old spelling). Mjellby Konstgård is an art foundation that holds outstanding exhibitions of works by the group of six Swedish painters who created what became known as Halmstads Gruppen. Founded in the 1920s, the group stayed together for 50 years. During the 1920s and 1930s they were strongly linked with Cubism and Surrealism.

Of the many great beaches near Halmstad, the most famous is **Tylösand**, with excellent golf, beach, nightlife, and a fashionable hotel. Tylösand is a place to see and be seen. A short distance north of Tylösand you will find the much quieter **Haverdalstrand**, a beach with spectacular sand dunes up to 36 m (118 feet) high.

Laholm

The oldest and smallest town in Halland is Laholm, founded in 1231 and a little gem of a West Coast town with an astounding number of fun sculptures. The dominant industry here for hundreds of years was pottery.

Tourist Information

Laholm Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), Rådhuset, Stortorget 312 22, Laholm, ☎ 0430-154-50, fax 0430-166-42.

Sightseeing

The town center is the medieval district of **Gamleby** (Danish for old town). It has cobbled streets and many small Danish-style houses with pretty gardens. There are many reminders of the town's past. This entire coastal area was for hundreds of years in a constant tug-of-war between Denmark, Sweden and Norway. **Stortorget**, the main square, features a charming daily market. All over the little town the sculptures bring a smile to locals and tourists alike.

There is good salmon and trout fishing in the River Lagan. Buy a fishing license from the tourist office. Of course there are the many pretty sandy beaches nearby. Mellbystrand, only six km (four miles) away from the center, is one of the best with 12 km (7½ miles) of fine sandy beach and rolling dunes. There are also some marked nudist/naturist sections.

Where to Stay

Laholms Stadshotell, Hästtorget 3, 31230 Laholm, ☎ 0430-128-30, fax 0430-127-30, www.laholmsstadshotell.se. A charming and historic hotel building dating back to 1882 with just a few individually decorated rooms. Personal and friendly service. Close to Mellbystrand beach, golf and salmon fishing. 16 rooms, $$.

STF vandrarhem Mellbystrand "Solstickan" (hostel), Kustvägen 152, 31261 Mellbystrand, ☎ 0430-252-20, fax 0430-496-66, www.solstikan.com. This small and extremely popular hostel is only 150 m (500 feet) from the longest beach in Sweden. If traveling during high season, book well in advance. 36 beds, $.

Båstad

After crossing the invisible border between the Halland and Skåne provinces you will reach the southernmost little town on this Västkust journey, named Båstad, a town most people associate with tennis and wealthy visitors. It is the official starting and ending point of Hallands Ginstleden bicycle trail. Båstad is one of the most exclusive summer resort towns in Sweden, with many well-off summer house owners. For out-of-towners, the town is best known for the **Båstad Open**, an elite tennis tournament held here since 1948. It attracts the best players in the world, with the usual jet-set following them here. The town itself is low-key, without a lot of attractions. There is more emphasis on "the good life" here – relaxing, eating, drinking, and maybe a game of golf in beautiful surroundings. Its wealth began back in the 15th century from herring fishing. It was not until the turn of the 19th century that it started to develop as a popular seaside resort.

Tourist Information

Båstad Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), Torget 26920, Båstad, ☎ 0431-750-45, fax 0431-700-55, www.bastad.com.

Where to Stay

Hotel Skansen, Kyrkogatan 2, 26921 Båstad, ☎ 0431-558-100, fax 0431-558-110, www.hotelskansen.se. Next to the yacht harbor, close to the beach and tennis. Modern rooms, many with views of the sea, set in four buildings, the oldest dating back to 1877. Major renovation took place in 2001. Spa. 52 rooms, $$.

Värdshus Hovs Hallar, Segeltorp 7570, 26991 Båstad, ☎ 0431-448-370, www.hovshallar.com. This great little inn and a cottage village are set in the Hovs Hallar Nature Reserve. All rooms have a private terrace. The well-equipped cottages have kitchens. Restaurant. 26 rooms, $$, and 11 cottages, $$.

Where to Eat

Restaurang Hjorten, Roxmansvägen 23. Set in a small, charming inn with the same, this restaurant specializes in escargots and steaks, as well as excellent Irish coffee to finish off the meal.

Restaurant Sand at Hotel Skansen is one of the best, both for their food and for people-watching. Fish and fabulous seafood platters in the summer served outdoors with an unbeatable view of the sea.

The **"No-Name-Hut,"** harbor-side, serves delicious smoked mackerel, potato salad and more for takeout. Cash only.

■ The Province of Bohuslän

Following mostly the Cykelspåret bicycle route north from Göteborg, you'll travel the length of this rugged, indented coast with its flat and rounded granite rocks and will pass through a few of the countless islands and many picturesque fishing villages. It is easy to understand why so many tourists and painters choose this province for their summer getaway. This coast is best explored by bicycle, car, boat or ferry, or any combination of the four. It's an area where watersports and seafood restaurants are so plentiful, that visitors have real problems choosing among them all. The restaurants listed below not only have superb fish, but also offer something special in ambiance or location.

Tourist Information

Bohuslän Tourism, www.bohuslan.com, or contact Västsvenska Turistrådet, Kungsportsavenyn 31-3541136, Göteborg, ☎ 031-818-300, fax 031-818-301.

Kungälv

Just 15 km (nine miles) north of Göteborg lies Kungälv, once an important Viking center, and over many centuries an important battleground. Now it is a peaceful and sleepy suburb of Göteborg with pretty pastel-colored houses and cobbled streets.

Tourist Information

Kungälv Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), Fästningsholmen 44281, Kungälv, ☎ 0303-239-202.

Sightseeing

The impressive remains of **Bohus Fästning** (Bohus Fortress), constructed by the Norwegians in 1308 and rebuilt by the Swedes in 1676, dominates this town. Having suffered constant attacks, it is now mostly in ruin, but it deserves a few hours exploration. There is also a 17th-century wooden church worth a look at.

Marstrand

A side-trip to perhaps the most popular destination on this coast, Marstrand, is a must. This famous sailing mecca and summer party town is only 30 minutes by car, bus, or ferry from Göteborg, and even closer from Kungälv. During the 16th century, Marstrand Island became wealthy from herring fishing, and, at that time still under Norwegian rule, became infamous as the most immoral town in the area. The fishing subsided and the old fishing shacks were turned into fine bathhouses during the first part of the 1800s. In the 1880s it became a high-society resort and somehow the reputation from back then still lingers. Marstand should be visited, but if you are looking for a quiet time, avoid the weekends at the height of summer when the place is overcrowded with sailors and sun-worshippers.

Tourist Information

Marstrand Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), Hamngatan 44030, Marstrand, ☎ 0303-600-87, fax 0303-600-18.

Sightseeing

Today, Marstrand is best-known for its famous regattas, but is also known for its beautifully decorated houses in Oscarian turn-of-the-century style. It is a joy to stroll around in this walk-friendly little town with cobblestone streets and alleys, and to look at the pretty wooden houses dating back as far as the 18th century. The best part: there are no cars allowed.

On a rock above town stands a most impressive fortress, **Carlstens Fästning**, a large stone-walled castle. Explore it on your own or visit the walls, dungeons and the tower on a guided tour. This is yet another fortress that was turned in to a prison. During summer, the quayside is fun to visit, with lots of activities, markets and a nice mix of locals, boat people and other visitors.

For an unforgettable day on the water, book a tour with **Bengt Stranne**, a colorful, salty former sea captain. Contact: Strannes Nautiska, ☎ 030 360-919, www.strannesnautiska.info.se.

Where to Stay

Grand Hotell Marstrand, Rådhusgatan 2, 440 30 Marstrand, ☎ 0303-603-22, 0303-600-53, www.grandmarstrand.se. One of the most famous hotels on Västkusten, small and exclusive, with a renowned restaurant. Many of the rooms have balconies and harbor views. 16 rooms, six suites, $$$$.

Villa Maritime, 44030 Marstrand, ☎ 0303-610-25, fax 0303-616-20, www.villa-maritme.se, offers small efficiencies with well-equipped kitchenettes. Restaurant with outdoor seating, sauna and laundry room. Heated pool.

Båtellet (hostel), ☎ 0303-600-10, fax 0303-606-07. Set in an old bathhouse from 1858, this is one of the most charming hostels on the coast. Restaurant. Heated swimming pool, sauna and gym. Book well in advance. 97 beds, $.

Grand Hotell Marstrand

Where to Eat

You won't have to search for a place to eat, as the restaurants are plentiful. The most prestigious is **Grand Tenan** in the Grand Hotel. Impeccable service, African-inspired dishes and the famous house speciality: local langoustines seasoned with garlic.

Fullriggaren on Hamngatan Street is a newcomer, and worth a visit. Excellent fish and seafood and a perfect harbor-side location.

The **Societetshuset** looks like a wedding-cake and it is open to the public from May to September. Bring the camera and stop in for a meal at the Öfvre Verandan restaurant (upstairs with a view) or for a drink in Oscars baren downstairs.

For those on a budget there are excellent fish and chips to be found around the harbor.

Bästkusten & the Islands of Tjörn & Orust

Back on the mainland, after the Marstrand detour, follow the scenic coastal road on a part of Bohuslän called Bästkusten (the Best Coast). For once, this is a play on words that actually works both in Swedish and in English: Västkusten (the West Coast) and Bästkusten (the Best Coast). Once you reach Stenungsund, turn off in the direction of Tjörn Broarna (the Tjörn Bridges), a breathtakingly beautiful series of three bridges that connect the islands Tjörn and Orust with Stenungsund on the mainland.

These two large islands, with many smaller islands dotted around them, exemplify what the northern west coast is all about: rugged and beautiful nature, combined with charming fishing villages and lots of activities on water and on land.

Tourist Information

The main tourist office for Bästkusten is loaded with information and is in Stenungsund, so it could be a good idea to make a stop there before heading over the bridges. **Bästkustens Turistbyrå**

(Tourist Office), main office, Kulturhuset Fregatten, Stenungsund, ☎ 0303-833-27, fax 0303-68049, www. bastkusten.se.

Tjörn

The island of Tjörn, with almost 15,000 permanent inhabitants, is known for its fishing, as well as its arts and crafts. **Nordiska Akvarell Museet** (the Nordic Watercolor Museum) is right at the water's edge in the village of Skärhamn, on the southwestern side of the island. The museum houses works of contemporary watercolorists, as well as paintings from the past. If you feel creative and want to take advantage of the surroundings and the exceptional light, painting courses are given by professional artists. You can even rent a guest art studio. Close by is the quaint little island of **Klädesholme**. Linked by a bridge to Tjörn, it is a most charming little island with a cluster of wooden cottages hanging onto the stony surface. Not all is fairy-tale cute, though; there are also some not-so-pretty fishing industry buildings. This is, after all, an island where quite a few inhabitants make a living from the water. An attractive curved bridge links Tjörn with Orust. In the waters between these two main islands, the small pinkish-red islands, combined with the fragrance of salt air and seaweed, makes it an unforgettable trip.

■ Tourist Information

Bästkustens Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), Tjörn office, Södra Hamnen, Skärhamn, ☎ 0304-671-040, fax 0304-671-670.

■ Where to Stay

B&N Huset, Södrahamnen 8, 471 21 Skärhamn, ☎ 0304-674-705, fax 0304-670-119, www.bnhuset.bn.se. This small gem enjoys a superb setting on the water's edge. Six rooms, $$.

Bergabo Hotel, Kyrkvägen 22, 471 41 Rönnäng, ☎ 0304-677-080, fax 0304-677-352, www.bergabo.com. Surrounded by water and trees, this small resort in a picture-perfect setting is a special place. Lots of activities are offered. Bergabo has a restaurant, 11-full service hotel rooms and 26 fully equipped apartments with kitchens. During the summer months there are also rooms available in a nearby newly renovated hostel. Hotel-rooms $$, apartments $$, hostel $.

Orust

Orust is the third-largest island in Sweden, with just over 15,000 inhabitants. Lots of pretty fishing villages spread across the fascinating cragged coastline of the island, and there are also quite a few farms in the fertile central areas. Apart from fishing and farming, there is also an important boat-building industry dating back to the time of the Vikings, and shipping is also a major activity. Gullholmen and Stora Härmanö islands, off the western side of Orust, are the last outpost before the open sea and just a short ferry crossing away. On the northern side of

Gullholmen there is an unspoiled fishing village with the houses built right on the water's edge and two interesting 19th-century houses to visit: Stenstugan was built for the poor and Skepparhuset was owned by a wealthy sea captain.

■ Tourist Information

Bästkustens Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), Orust office, Norra Strandvägen 3, Henån, ☎ 0304-311-40, fax 0304-314-01.

■ Sightseeing

One of the best ways to enjoy the the Archipelago is in a kayak. **Orust Kayak & Friluftsliv**, Ellös, ☎ 0304-512-00, www.orust-kajak.se, offers excellent courses in kayaking, gives lots of good advice and recommendations for getting around on your own, and rents or sells kayaks and all related equipment.

Leaving the island of Orust via the villages of Ellös and Morlanda, take a ferry to Malö, then via bridges to **Flatö**, a visit to **Handelsman Flink** (Merchant Flink) is highly recommended. This is a traditional meeting place, and today it is a lovely combination of grocery store, restaurant, café, guest harbor, and a perfect little inn, all right on the water. Handelsman Flink, ☎ 0304-550-01, www.handelsmanflink.se.

After a short ferry-ride, it's on to **Fiskebäckskil**. This is a well-off, artsy little village. There are old wooden houses with ornate porches and verandas high on cliffs, and an art café. Painter Carl Wilhelmson was born here. **Restaurant Brygghuset** is a rustic little place with outdoor seating and excellent seafood. ☎ 0532-222-22. Reservations strongly recommended. There is also a ferry taking diners from Lysekil over to this restaurant.

■ Where to Stay

Café Emma Restaurant, Vandrarhem and Konferens (hostel), 474 13 Mollösund, ☎ 0304-211-75, fax 0304-215-00, www.cafeemma.com. Just called Emma's among the locals, it is on the southwestern coast of the island in Mollösund, the oldest fishing village in the province. All rooms have harbor views. Use the shared kitchen if you want to cook for yourself. Restaurant. Bicycle and boat rental. Five rooms, $.

■ Where to Eat

Emma's in Mollösund is one of the best, serving home-style cooking with mostly local ingredients. They have a wonderful veranda and outdoor seating.

Lysekil

This is a region where ferries weave among islands and water passages, and yet another ferry across Sweden's only real fjord, Gullmaren, takes you to Lysekil, the largest coastal town in the province. It is set amidst forests, mountains, and open landscapes on the tip of Stangnäs Peninsula, where the Gullmaren fjord flows out in the part of the North Sea called Skagerack. This town has been a popular summer resort since the 19th century. There is an annual, popular and lively jazz festival in July.

Tourist Information

Lysekils Turist & Informationsbyrå (Tourist Office), Södra Hamngatan 645323, Lysekil, ☎ 0523-130-50, fax 0523-130-59.

Sightseeing

Climb the steps up to the **Lysekil Kyrka**, a church carved in 1901 from the pinkish granite of the area. A short stroll from the marina is **Havets Hus** (the House of the Sea), a unique spot. It is actually a museum with 34 aquariums, the largest of which is a tunnel aquarium containing 140,000 liters (37,000 gallons) of seawater, that is continuously pumped in from Gullmarsfjorden. Then there is the Bioscanner Aquarium where monitors allow you to zoom in on the various small fish.

This is also a great place for hiking, as a good part of the seashore now is a nature reserve with good hiking.

Here there are opportunities for all types of watersports: diving, fishing, boating, sea kayaking and more. But number one on most visitors' lists is the wonderful **Seal Safaris**, where you'll get a close-up of the cuddly charmers. These safaris are offered during July and August, when every afternoon except Sundays a charming old fishing boat leaves for two-hour tours in the afternoon to the outer archipelago, where there are large colonies of harbor seals. Contact Havets Hus, ☎ 0523-19671, or the tourist office.

Where to Stay

Lysekils Havhotell, Turistgatan 13, 453 30 Lysekil, ☎ 0523-797-50, fax 0523-14204, www.strandflickorna.se. This old, charming small hotel is painted bright red and has 15 individually decorated rooms. It is set on a cliff, with a fabulous water view. $$.

Strand Vandrarhem (hostel), Strandvägen 1, 453 30 Lysekil, ☎ 0523-797-51, fax 0523-122-02, www.strandflickorna.se. A friendly hostel perfectly located on the waterfront. 70 beds, $.

Where to Eat

Prånen, Södra Hamngatan. This restaurant and bar is just above the water, with a great sea view and reasonably priced fresh fish and other seafood.

Smögen

From Lysekil, zigzag north via Route 162 and then west on 171 in the direction of Smögen, an old fishing village famous for its "Smögenräkor" (Smögen shrimps), the number-one rated shrimp in Sweden. It is a clean and tidy village, with its well-kept red fishing cabins, famous as a sea resort since the beginning of the 20th century. Smögen is famous for its fish and shrimp auction and for **Bageri Skäret**, a café with an ocean-view and delicious home-baked goods. Smögen has lately become a hip, happening, and somewhat noisy place for young people in July and August.

Tourist Information

Smögen Turistinformation (Tourist Office), Torget 45043, Smögen, ☎ 0523-37544.

Sightseeing

The island of **Hållö,** just a short distance from Smögen, is one of the most enchanting places. There is fascinating lighthouse dating back to 1842 that guided sailors through the sometimes thick coastal fog. Smögen is a good place for diving enthusiasts, with the local diving club most welcoming. Contact the tourist office. Following the coastline north from Smögen on small coastal roads, you will pass through quaint fishing villages, and when reaching Fjällbacka, you should definitely make a stop.

Where to Stay

Smögens Havsbad, Hotellgatan 26, 45043 Smögen, ☎ 0523-668-450, www.smogenshavsbad.se, one of the most beautiful resort hotels in Sweden, was designed to blend in with the natural surroundings. Two buildings house tastefully decorated rooms. Café/restaurant dockside. Spa and gym. 76 rooms, $$$.

Makrillvikens Vandrarhem (hostel), Makrillgatan, 45043 Smögen, ☎ 0523-315-65, fax 0523-306-55, www.makrillviken.se. Ideal location just a few feet from the sea. 82 beds, $.

Fjällbacka

Right on the coastal road lies Fjällbacka, a true postcard village, with pastel houses set in the rocks and some nice pubs and restaurants along the harbor side. Movie buffs should head to **Ingrid Bergman Torget** (the village square), where a bust of the late Swedish actress overlooks the water and her summer getaway island house. During her long movie career and tumultuous private life, this is the place she always returned to for R&R. Her ashes were scattered over the water next to her house.

Tourist Information

Fjällbacka Turistinformation (Tourist Office), Ingrid Bergmans Torg 45071, Fjällbacka, ☎ 0525-321-20, fax 0525-311-43.

Sightseeing

The Fjällbacka archipelago is magnificent, with about 200 skerrets, islets and islands, some jutting out of the water as high mountains colored in shimmering pink and turning a brilliant red at sunset. It is divided by a labyrinth of narrow water passages. The windy **Väderöarna** (the Weather Islands), the farthest removed, offer unique flora and fauna. They are also a wonderful place for deep-sea diving. Contact: Westpoint Divers, ☎ 0525-310-49, www.westpointdivers.se.

Where to Stay

Stora Hotellet, Galärbacken, 451 71 Fjällbacka, ☎ 0525-310-03, fax 0525-310-93, www.storahotellet-fjallbacka.se. Even if you are on a budget, this is a place to splurge. The hotel was built at the turn of the century by an inventive Swedish sea captain after he returned home from years at sea. He named the rooms after ports and some of his other favorite places, as well as explorers and women. All of the rooms are decorated accordingly. This is a gem. Restaurant. 23 rooms, $$$.

The nearby hostel belonging to Stora Hotellet has 13 beds, $.

Grebbestad

A few miles north of Fjällbacka is Grebbestad village, with excellent camping and a great beach. Four km (2½ miles) north of Grebbestad is **Tjurpannan** (the Bulls Forehead) **Nature Reserve**, right on the ocean with breathtaking views, beautiful steep cliffs, and easy hiking trails. A

little bit over a mile south of Grebbestad lies the great resort area of Tanum Strand.

Tourist Information

Grebbestad Info Center (Tourist Office), Torget 457 72, Grebbestad, ☎ 0525-100-80, fax 0525-142-02.

Where to Stay

Tanum Strand, 457 95 Grebbestad, ☎ 0525-191-00, fax 0525-191-47, www.tanumstrand.se. A full-service resort in a picturesque setting just south of Grebbestad. Very nice hotel rooms and well-equipped cottages in various sizes. Restaurant, lobby bar, cafés. Spa. Lots of activities offered: boating, diving, golf and more. A guest harbor with anchorage for 175 boats makes it a lively place. 77 hotel rooms and 98 cottages. $$.

Grebbestads Vandrarhem & Minihotell, Nedre Långgatan 15, 457 72, Grebbestad, ☎ 0525-614-14, fax 0525-614-14, www.grebbestads vandrarhem, is located in the center of Grebbestad with a view of the ocean. 40 beds, $.

Tanumshede

An important side-trip that should not be missed is Tanumshede. If you are not in a rental car, rent a bicycle and head over to this former coastal settlement five km (three miles) inland from Grebbestad. Locally, the little town is known for Tanums Gestgiferi, an inn established more than 300 years ago. It is a lovely place for a lunch break. Today, however, Tanumshede is mostly known for the historically important, 3,000-year-old rock carvings that are scattered over a large area. There are Bronze Age (1500 BC-500 BC) giant rock glyphs chiseled into the surface of the flat rocks, probably by stone tools, then painted. There are many carvings of boats and animals, mostly reindeer, although the most talked about is an impressive carving of an amorous "bridal couple." A small museum, Vitlycke Museet, provides background and interpretion of the carvings. The museum itself is an architectural gem. The entire area is on the UNESCO World Heritage site list since 1994.

Tourist Information

Turistkontoret Tanum (Tourist Office), Bygdegårdsplan 457 31, Tanumshede, ☎ 0525-183-80.

Strömstad

After being the site for many battles between Norwegians, Swedes and Danes, Strömstad, the last town before the Norwegian border, turned into a popular summer resort in the 18th century when it started as a spa town with saltwater and seaweed baths. Situated some 170 km (105 miles) north of Gothenburg (closest way), this is one of the Swedish towns that claims to get the most sunshine hours in northern Europe.

Tourist Information

Strömstad Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), Torget, N. Hamnen 45222 Strömstad, ☎ 0526-623-30, fax 0526-623-35, www.stromstadtourist.se.

Sightseeing

Worth a look are **Strömstad Museum**, housed in a gorgeous 18th-century red brick mansion, and **Strömstad Kyrka**, which has a very impressive interior, but is of no historical significance. **Stadshuset** (the Town Hall), shown at left, is the oddest building in town, a most impressive structure with a huge copper roof. It was built by an eccentric son of a local jeweler who became a wealthy financier; he designed and built this folly at the turn of the 19th century as a memorial to his parents. He never get to see it finished, nor live in the penthouse as he had planned, as he left town after a fight with the city fathers.

Where to Stay

Laholmen Hotell, Badhusgatan, 452 30 Strömstad, ☎ 0526-197-00, fax 0526-100-36, www.laholmen.se. A waterfront hotel with large rooms, some with balconies. Restaurant with a view, bar and nightclub. Sauna. 152 rooms, $$$.

Lommeland (hostel), Rod Lommeland, 452 93 Strömstad, ☎ 0526-420-20, is a great place to be close to nature; it's set in a forest 20 km (12 miles) north of Strömstad. Plenty of outdoor activities are nearby. 57 beds, $.

Where to Eat

Göstases, Strandpromenaden. Located in the cellar of an old bathhouse, this is a cozy restaurant during a rainy evening. On sunny summer days there is a popular quayside outdoor dining area. This is a perfect place for seafood lovers. During lobster season the restaurant arranges lobster fishing tours.

Salt, Badhusgatan, is in Hotel Laholmen. It serves good food; do not miss the fabulous seafood lunch buffet served Mon-Sat. Sea view.

Exploring the Area

Cross **Svinesundsbron**, built 1946 just after WWII, a bridge 420 m (1,328 feet) long and 65 m (213 feet) high connecting Sweden and Norway. Or continue on to the Norwegian capital, Oslo, only 120 km (74 miles) north of Strömstad. From Strömstad there are many local ferry connections and boats to various places in Norway.

If time and weather permit, a trip by ferry or taxi boat from Strömstad to **Koster Öarna** (the Koster Islands), the most westerly inhabited islands in Sweden, is highly recommended. The two small, beautiful islands are ideal for hiking or biking. Bikes can be rented at almost any jetty on the islands. A handful of small seafood restaurants offer food on both islands. Most parts of these islands are protected, so flower picking or stone gathering are not allowed.

Göta Kanal

Göta Kanal is an amazing waterway; many miles of it were dug by hand between the years 1810 and 1832 with shovels made of wood and iron. Even today, it is the biggest infrastructure project built in Sweden. It took nearly 60,000 men, including soldiers, Russian prisoners of war, and civilians, over 22 years to complete this 615-km (382-mile) civil engineering masterpiece that passes through six lakes and three canals with 65 bridges and 65 locks. The most famous canal parts are the 190 km (118 miles) between Lake Vänern and Lake Vättern and from Lake Vättern to the Baltic Sea. The project was initiated and led by Baltzar von Platen, a naval officer and politician, who died three years before the completion and royal inauguration of Göta Kanal. Also involved in the construction was John Ericson, who later invented and patented the ship screw propeller and also designed one of history's most famous warships, the American Civil War-era USS *Monitor*.

The canal, often referred to as the Blue Ribbon, crosses the country and basically links the North Sea with the Baltic Sea (including Vättern and Vänern lakes). After the inauguration in 1832 it was used as a very important transport route for commerce and it was also the fastest way to get between Gothenburg and Stockholm. For passenger traffic, fashionable steamships were built, and today, three of the vintage steamships still cruise through the lakes and narrow waterways. Because rail and road had almost entirely taken over goods and passenger traffic from the waterway by the end of the 1800s, the canal risked being forgotten. But tourism kept it going, and today it is has become one of Sweden's most important tourist draws.

Göta Kanal can be experienced onboard a historic ship, a chartered sailboat or motorboat, and it is a slow-moving, beautiful way to see the Swedish countryside. The winding canal can also be enjoyed by bicycling the friendly and mostly flat terrain along the old towpaths where oxen once assisted the floating vessels by giving them a tow. Whether on the water, on a bike, on horseback or on foot, the journey takes you through a region with picturesque small towns, open pastures, lush forests, medieval churches, convents and castles built hundreds of years ago.

In the mid-19th century, along the banks of the canal, some 10,000 trees were planted, a pretty avenue of old maple, ash and white-beam trees that now need to be replaced. You can be part of this unique avenue by buying a new tree; you will get a plaque with your name on it.

AB Göta Kanalbolag offers two- , four- and six-day leisurely cruises on their wonderfully restored vintage steamers, now powered by diesel. For the four- or six-day trip you can start in Göteborg or in Stockholm, sailing on *Juno* (built in 1874), the world's oldest registered passenger ship with overnight cabins. You can also sail on *Wilhelm Tham*, which was built in 1912. The two-day cruise is on the younger and pretty *Diana*, built in 1932. Together, the three ships carry about 3,000 passengers during the season, which starts in the beginning of May and ends in September. They share the space of Göta Kanal with a few one-day cruise ships and some 5,000 private pleasure boats.

The entire coast-to-coast six-day cruise costs SEK 12,295-18,000 per person in a shared double cabin, including meals. If your time or wallet does not permit doing the entire 615-km (382-mile) coast-to-coast journey, the best part of Göta Kanal is the 100 km (62 miles) between Motala on Lake Vättern and Söderköping/Mem on the Baltic, with beautiful natual surroundings and a total of 37 locks. This segment costs SEK 3,185-4,395 per person in a shared double cabin (meals included).

If you opt for the two-day cruise or decide to bike the canal towpaths, the charming little town of **Motala**, the "capital of Göta Kanal," is located almost halfway between Göteborg and Stockholm. This is a good starting point, as it was here the entire project got started and there is an excellent exhibit about the history of this remarkable canal. Nearby is also Motala Verkstad, which started out as a small engineering workshop in 1822 and was to play an important role in the Swedish industrial history.

Motala, situated on Lake Vättern, also boasts the largest inland sandy beach in northern Europe. In the town center, down by the guest harbor, there is an excellent and fun museum, **Motala Motormuseum**, with vintage cars and motorcycles in period settings and music to suit.

The two-day cruise and the bike route ends (or starts) in Söderköping, a medieval storybook town with cobbled streets and the beautiful Santa Anna Archipelago just a stone's throw away. The maximum speed al-

lowed on the canal is five knots, which means that as a cruise passenger you can get off the ship and walk along the canal and the locks for large segments of the way. This is a great way to watch the vintage ships and the smaller pleasure boats go through the locks. Not to be missed is one of the most spectacular and photogenic sections, the **Bergs Slussar**. This seven-lock stairway gradually lowers the boats to Lake Roxen.

An inexpensive and entertaining way to experience the Göta Kanal is by **bike**. The tourist offices in Motala and Söderköping sell excellent bicycle packages. One-way rentals are possible for a small dropoff charge. For biking enthusiasts there is also a wonderful bike trail around the entire Lake Vättern, 410 km (254 miles). Contact the Motala tourist office.

Whether taking the historical nature cruise between Gothenburg and Stockholm, the two-day part of it, or bicycling the towpath, take the opportunity to make frequent stops at the locks along Göta Kanal. Since 1998, this waterway is part of the distinctive "International Historic Civil Engineering Landmark" list and is in good company with other engineering marvels such as the Statue of Liberty, the Eiffel Tower, the Golden Gate Bridge, and the Panama Canal.

The PR Göta Kanal people are trying hard to promote a romantic image of the canal by calling it the "love canal." However, after observing many couples and families that travel the canal in their motor- and sailboats, maneuvering the tight locks and arguing with each other as they do so, it is easy to understand why Göta Kanal is commonly known as the "divorce ditch."

■ Tourist Information

Motala Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), Hamnen (the harbor) 591 86 Motala, ☎ 0141-225-254, fax 0141-214-557, www.motala.se. **Söderköping Turistbyrå** (Tourist Office), Stinsen at E22614 80 Söderköping, ☎ 0121-181-61, fax 0121-158-33, www.soderkoping.se. **AB Göta kanalbolag**, ☎ 0141-202-050, fax 0141-215-550, www.gotakanal.se. Excellent website for information about the vintage cruise ships, charter boats, the canal, and much more.

■ Where to Stay

Göta Hotel, 591 31 Borensberg, ☎ 0141-400-60, fax 0141-400-61, www.gotahotel.se, a storybook hotel built in 1908, is situated 15 km (nine miles) east of Motala, right on Göta Kanal. The hotel features spacious, individually decorated rooms, and an excellent restaurant with outdoor dining overlooking the canal. 12 rooms, $$.

Vadstena Klosterhotel & Slottshotell, 592 24 Vadstena, ☎ 0143-315-30, fax 0143-136-48, www.klosterhotel.se. A 10-minute drive

south of Motala, this unique hotel is on the shores of Lake Vättern. The modern, comfortable hotel is in one of Sweden's oldest buildings, an imposing 13th-century convent. There is good food and great service in the Munkklostret (the monastery) restaurant. 51 rooms, $$$.

Romantik Hotel Söderköpings Brunn, Skörbergsgatan 35, 614 21 Söderköping, ☎ 0121-109-00, fax 0121-139-41, www.soderkopingsbrunn.se. This historic and charming spa hotel dates back to 1774. Its restaurant is well known for its cuisine. Heated outdoor pool, full-service spa with three Jacuzzis. 103 rooms, $$$.

STF Vandrarhem Glasbruket (hostel), Kanalvägen 17, 590 31 Borensberg, ☎ 0141-408 20, fax 0141-408-20. www.glasbruket.com. This wonderful little hostel has rooms and well-equipped apartments set in an old glassworks. Coffee shop, spa and sauna. Canoe, rowboat and bicycle rentals. Crawfishing in August, September and October. Skating and skiing on the frozen canal in winter. 76 beds, $.

East Sweden: Gotland & Öland

In East Sweden we have included the island provinces of Gotland and Öland, both unspoiled and with fabulous beaches, but otherwise entirely different from each other. Most tourists visiting the islands come from Sweden, with a large proportion from the Stockholm region. On the international side, Germany is a clear number one.

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The Province of Gotland

Gotland, sometimes called "Queen of the Baltic" or "Pearl of the Baltic," is almost like a miniature country in itself. Gotlanders do not really feel they are part of Sweden, displaying the worldwide "island independence" syndrome. However, Gotland has been continuously Swedish since 1645. The island first became part of Swedenabout the year 800. During the Viking days, it was a center of world trade; then seafaring farmers came and, from the 12th to the 14th centuies, it was closely allied with the Hanseatic League and amassed great wealth. The golden era of trade and shipping came to an abrupt end when the Danes conquered the island in 1361. It wasn't until Gotland became Swedish again after the peace treaty of Brömsebro in 1645 that the island again became an important trade center.

Gotland covers an area of 3,140 square km (1,212 square miles), exactly the same size as Rhode Island. It is an unspoiled island covered with unique vegetation, and along the 800 km (497 miles) of coastline are some spectacular sea cliffs and pretty, mostly deserted, beaches. The landscape is sprinkled with wooden houses and a profusion of medieval country churches, 92 of them to be exact, most built between 1150 and 1400. Despite the churches' dissimilar looks, they do have a similar history. According to legend, Saint Olav christened the islanders during a visit in 1029, after which wooden churches were built. The well-traveled and wealthy farmers soon replaced them with stone churches, continually remodeling them according to the latest style. The early stone churches were built in Romanesque style, and the later ones in Gothic style. Next to many of the churches, a *castal* (a fortified defense tower) was erected, serving as a reminder of the tumultuous times at the end of the Middle Ages. For a nation practically indifferent to religion, it is as-

tounding how well it takes care of the churches, with Gotland being the prime example.

Of the 58,000 permanent residents on the island, about 23,000 live in the capital, **Visby**, a picturebook town with one of the best-preserved medieval ring walls in Europe. Since 1995, the walled part of town has been included on UNESCO's prestigious World Heritage list.

The weather is fairly mild for Sweden, with a nice spring and summer, a wonderfully long fall, then a short winter. The largest industry on the island is farming, but tourism is catching up quickly. Gotland is the most sexually "equal" province in Sweden. Today, 55% of those in leading positions (private sector and government) are men and 45% women, with 39% of all private enterprises owned by women.

Gotlands Turistförening (Tourist Information Centre), Hamngatan 4621 25, Visby, ☎ 0498-201-700, fax 0498-201-717, www.gotland.info.

■ Getting Here

The first tourists to discover the island in the mid-1800s had to travel by steamer, a trip that took about 10 hours. Today travel time is not a problem. You can get to this enchanting island by plane from Stockholm in 40 minutes and by high-speed ferries in about three hours from the city of Nynäshamn, situated 58 km (36 miles) south of Stockholm, or in only about 2½ hours from the city of Oscarshamn, which is 75 km (47 miles) north of Kalmar. The shortest distance between mainland Sweden and Gotland is 90 km (56 miles).

By Ferry: Large modern car ferries carry passengers, bicycles and cars from Nynähamn, south of Stockholm, and from Oskarshamn on the east coast of the Småland province. For information and reservations contact: **Destination Gotland**, ☎ 08-201-020, www.destinationgotland.se

By Air: For daily air services to Visby Airport from Stockholm's Arlanda airport, contact **Skyways**, ☎ 08-509-05050, www.skyways.se. For daily air services to Visby Airport from Stockholm's Bromma airport, contact **Gotlands Flyg**, ☎ 0498-222-222, www.gotlandsflyg.se.

■ Getting Around

Visitors can navigate Gotland by bicycle, rental car, local buses and taxi. During high season, be aware of the "imported" cab drivers on loan from Stockholm and other bigger cities. Many of them are there just for the money and do not know a thing about Gotland.

Bicycle Rentals

Tip: An excellent detailed bicycle map can be bought at the tourist office, which is good to have even if you are planning to travel by car.

There are many places to rent a bike in Visby. One of the best, with professional and friendly staff, is **Intersport**, located just outside Österport (east gate). Address: Östervåg 1, 621 45 Visby, ☎ 0498-249-035. Daily rate for a seven-gear bicycle is about SEK 75, or SEK 375 for a week. Intersport also rents tents, bike trailers and other related equipment. Or contact the Tourist Office.

If you get tired of cycling, you can bring your bicycle on any island bus for a flat fee of SEK 25.

Car Rental

Avis, Donnersplats 2, 621 57 Visby, ☎ 0498-219-810.

MABI, Söderväg 6, Visby, ☎ 0498-279-396.

■ Golf

Gotland is a great place for golfers, especially in spring and fall when the courses are uncrowded. One of the more spectacular courses worth a mention is **Visby Golfklubb**'s seaside course in Kronholmen, as well as **Gumbalde Golf & Country Club** nestled in a beautiful countryside setting. See www.gotlandgolf.com or contact the Tourist Office.

■ In & Around Water

Beaches

The shortest and most convenient ways to get from Visby directly to the island's best beaches:

To **Sudersand**, 70 km (43 miles), reached by Route 148 by car, bicycle and ferry. Or by local bus 21 from Visby to the ferry in Fårösund and then bus 23 from the Faro side of the ferry. The ferry departs every half-hour during daytime.

To **Holmhällar**, 90 km (56 miles), reached by Route 142 to Vamlingbo, then follow the "Holmhällar" signs. Bus 11 or 12.

To **Ljugarn**, about 40 km (25 miles), reached by Route 143. Bus 13.

Offshore Islands

There are a few larger and smaller islands belonging to this province: Gotska Sandön, Stora Karlsö, Lilla Karlsö and the, most famous, the island of Fårö (see page 222).

Gotska Sandön is a remote national park – 38 km (24 miles) north of Gotland and a two-hour ferry ride from Fårösund. Here you will find silence and fascinating nature with sand dunes, sandy beaches, heathland and virgin pine forests. This is an island of myths and legends, a former stronghold of pirates. Very basic accommodations. See www.gotskasandon.com, or contact the Tourist Office.

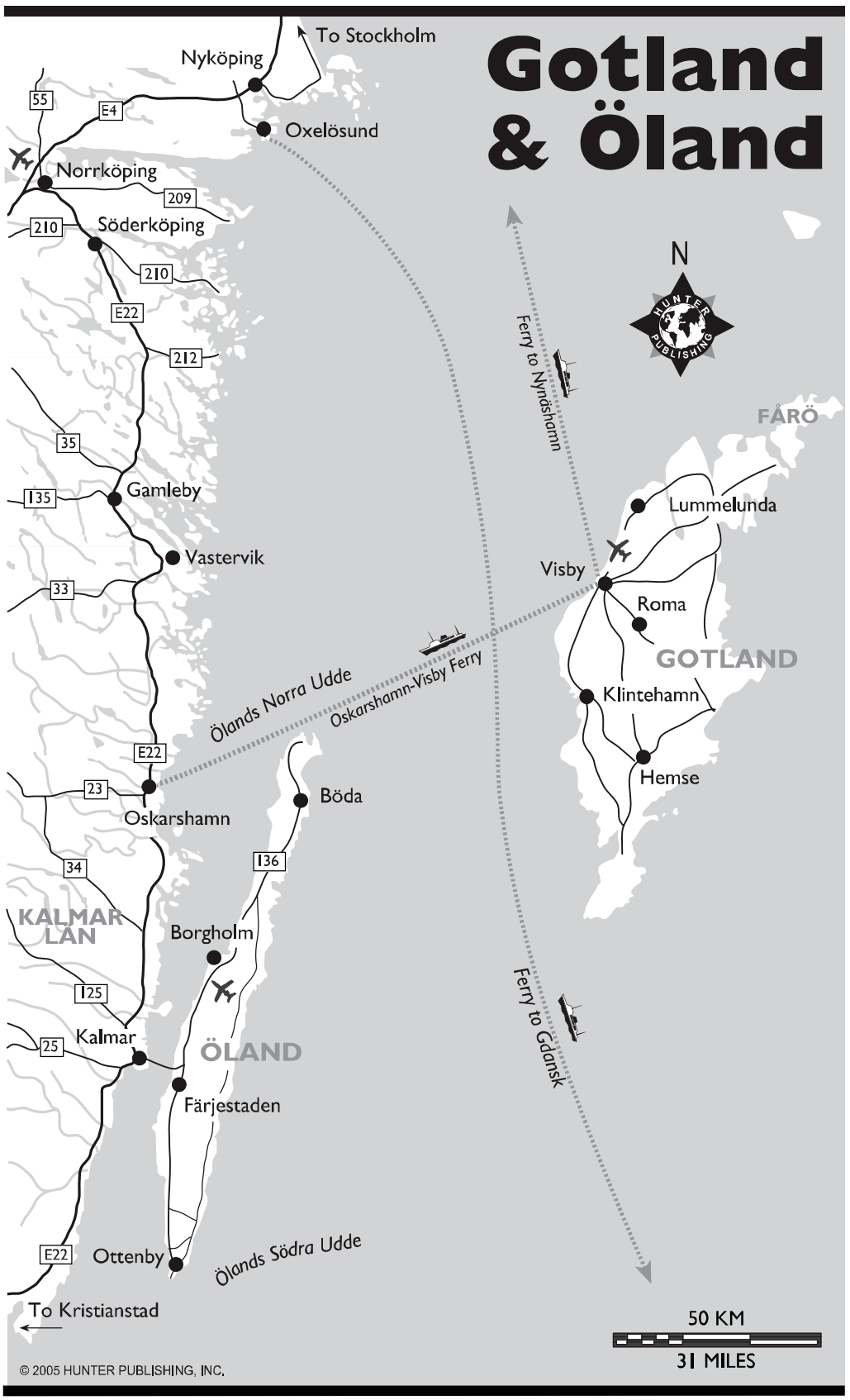
Stora Karlsö is reached from Klintehamn. A wonderful 30-minute boat trip will take you to this nature reserve. A guided tour on the island is included in the boat fare; you will see all kinds of fascinating seabirds and a most unusual flora. Make a stop for lunch at the seaside restaurant before returning, or if you do not mind basic accommodations, you can spend a night or two. See www.storakarlso.com or contact the Tourist Office.

Lilla Karlsö is reached via a 20-minute boat from Djupvik, situated just a few km south of Klintehamn. Day-tourists will have an opportunity to admire the unique flora, and the bird-cliffs here, as on bigger Stora Karlsö, are crowded with birds. You will also see hundreds of Gutefår (Gotland sheep) – unique in that both males and females have horns. The only drawback to this enchanting island is that the summer season is too short and too crowded, and during the wonderful spring/early summer and fall season many restaurants and attractions are closed and there is almost nothing going on. From here you can return to Stockholm or take the ferry over to Oskarshamn, from where you can visit the provinces of Öland and Småland.

■ Visby

Situated on the west coast of Gotland, this once-important Viking site and the center for the Hanseatic League in the Baltic is a well-preserved 13th-century walled city. The city wall is 3,440 m (11,286 feet or 2.13 miles) long and 11 m (36 feet) high. Of the original 51 towers, 36 remain. It is the best-preserved medieval city wall in Europe, after Carcassone in southern France. Within the ring-wall, the city is made up of tiny, winding, cobblestone streets, with roses everywhere and no cars allowed. Built on natural terraces, it is an idyllic small town with little wooden houses, many from the 17th and 18th centuries. Medieval church ruins blend nicely with large Hanseatic stone buildings and with noticeable German influences. The wall was built to guard against foreign invaders, but also to protect the wealthy townspeople from the surrounding country folk. After about 200 years of the Hanseatic golden era, the good times were over and Denmark, Mecklenburg and Sweden laid claim to the town with varying success.

After a long and gradual decline, authors and artists started to "discover" Visby at the beginning of the 19th century, and it was then that the town began to be looked upon as a historical monument. At that time the town


Gotland & Öland
To Stockholm
Nyköping
Oxelösund
Norrköping
Söderköping
55
E4
209
210
210
E22
212
35
135
Gamleby
Vastervik
33
E22
23
Oskarshamn
34
136
Böda
KALMAR LÄN
Borgholm
125
25
Kalmar
ÖLAND
Färjestaden
E22
Ottenby
To Kristianstad
Ölands Norra Udde
Oskarshamn-Visby Ferry
Ferry to Nynäshamn
Ferry to Gdansk
Ölands Södra Udde
N
HUNTER PUBLISHING
FÅRÖ
Lummelunda
Visby
Roma
GOTLAND
Klintehamn
Hemse
50 KM
31 MILES
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started spreading outside the wall. Visby is sometimes called the "city of ruins and roses" because of the many ruins of churches, abbeys and towers that remain from the Middle Ages and because roses were planted all over town beginning back in the 1940s.

Today, the city has 23,000 inhabitants, but only 3,000 live inside the city wall. Most of the island's 700,000 visitors show up between June and the middle of August, during which time Visby boasts an astonishing 60 restaurants and cafés. Visby, in the height of summer, is *the* place to be for the young party crowd, who come here for the high times and not for the culture. Most pubs, clubs and bars open for "after beach" drinks around 4 pm and stay open until 2 am, when by law they have to close.

MEDIEVAL WEEK

Medeltidsveckan (medieval week) takes place in Visby in the beginning of August. Unless you are really interested in being at an overcrowded place or enjoy medieval musical events, pageants and sporting tournaments, or are amused by knights in armor carrying plastic supermarket bags, this week is to be avoided. www.medeltidsveckan.com.

Sightseeing

Inside the ring-wall there is an irregular gridwork of narrow streets and alleyways that are a true joy to explore. The town looks much the same as it did in medieval times when the main streets ran down to the harbor from three main gates in the ring-wall. But today's main drag, **Strandgatan Street**, was originally right on the seashore.

If you're traveling in July, a guided informative city walk is recommended – offered only during that month. If not, just pick up a city map from the tourist office. A good place to start is the **Kruttornet** (gunpowder tower). This magnificent watch and defense tower once overlooked the original harbor; it was built back in the mid-1100s, before the wall itself. The **ring-wall** construction started in the mid-13th century, but the wall did not get its final look until a century later. Breaks in the ramparts were made by the invading Danish army in 1361. The name Kruttornet dates back only to the 1700s, when the army used it for storage of gunpowder. From Kruttornet, follow along the inside of the wall and make little detours whenever you see something interesting like a narrow alley or an old ruin, and do not forget to take a peek outside **Nordeport** (the North Gate) to get a splendid view of the wall.

Tip: A stroll around the wall is one of the best ways to get a feel of the city. Imagine it filled with foreign merchants, seafarers and church people, and then think of that during the time of the Hanseatic League, in which the mighty trade network of some 30 independent cities was centered in Visby.

Dedicated in 1225, the **St. Maria Cathedral** with its three black spires is visible from wherever you are in town. It was originally built by and for the German visitors and population. In the 14th century the church was rebuilt in Gothic style and St. Maria has been a cathedral since 1572. A side-trip up the steep steps for a view over the walled city is worth the effort. This is the only medieval church still standing within the walls, but the little town is littered with the ruins of some 15 churches and abbeys. On the **Stora Torget** square is the impressive **St. Carins** ruins that were left from a Franciscan monastery and church built in 1233. The ruins can be visited during summer. This square is one of the hubs for restaurants and nightlife and it is also where you'll find the only grocery store within the walls.

Burmeisterska Huset

Some 200 buildings within the city walls date back to the prosperous Hanseatic era, many of them multi-storied and step-gabled. On **Strandgatan** street you will see **Burmeisterska Huset**, one of the best-preserved houses from that time, built by the German merchant Burmeister, and **Gamla Apoteket**, among others. On Strandgatan you will also find **Gotlands Fornsal**, the county museum where visitors will get a comprehensive view of the island's history. Here you can learn about the fascinating and unique ***Bildstenar***, "picture stones" from 400 AD shaped like the blade of an axe. During the 800s they made a comeback with more elaborate pictures, and with a keyhole shape this time. There are 400 known picture stones today, some 15 of them still standing at the original spot. There are prehistoric skeletons on display, gold and

silver treasures from the Viking era to admire, plus information about the island's unique flora and fauna and its important limestone. The museum fills up an entire city block and is set in a former distillery from the 1770s and in a variety of medieval houses.

There are many green oases in Visby, both inside and outside the wall. **Almedalen**, on the site of the old natural harbor, is today a lovely, laid-back park area. However, for sheer beauty, the **Botanical Garden** is unbeatable. Here you will wander around fig trees, acacias and rows of roses in every imaginable color. Located in the southwest corner of the walled city, the gardens were founded in 1855 by a group of men calling themselves DBW, *De Badande Wännerna* (the bathing friends). They got together to eat, drink, talk art and politics. They then decided to import all kind of trees and flowers and make themselves an exotic park.

For a pleasant sunset stroll, head to romantic **Strandpromenaden**, a path between the wall and the water that stretches along the waterline from Kruttornet to the city hospital.

Shopping

There are plenty of shopping opportunities all over town. Some of the best shops are inside the wall, including **Yllet** on St. Hansgatan 19, which sells fashionable wool, linen, cotton and sheepskin clothing, much of it based on traditional Gotland patterns. Another interesting store is **Akatus** on Hansaplan, which mixes modern handicrafts with antiques and old farmstead artifacts.

Where to Stay

Wisby Hotell, Strandgatan 6, Visby ☎ 0498-257-500, fax 0498-257-500, www.wisbyhotel.se. Situated in the heart of the walled city, this charming hotel is housed in a thin, tall, centuries-old building. A hotel since the mid-1880s, today it is considered the best one on the island. Cozy and tastefully decorated rooms. Restaurant, bars and a Winter Garden. Unique pool area, sauna and sunroom. 134 rooms, $$$$.

Best Western Strand Hotel, Strandgatan 34, ☎ 0498-258-800, fax 0498-258-811, www.strandhotel.net, is a comfortable and relaxed first-class hotel set in a former brewery and operated with the latest environmentally friendly procedures. It has a perfect location on fashionable Strandgatan. Restaurant and a cozy bar. Pool, saunas and sun room. 110 rooms, $$$.

Almedalens Hotel, Strandvägen 8, 621 55 Visby, ☎ 0498-271-866, fax 0498-218-502, www. almedalen.nu. A small and price-worthy apartment-hotel in a perfect setting, with a view over the medieval old port and the Baltic in one direction, and beautiful Almedalen park in the other. The building dates back to the 19th century, but the apartments

have recently been renovated and all have fully equipped kitchens. Restaurant. Parking. 9 rooms, $$.

Hamnhotellet, Färjeleden 3, 621 58 Visby, ☎ 0498-201-250, fax 0498-201-270, www.gotlandsresor.se. The nondescript hotel building has no history, but offers good rates and comfortable, modern rooms. It's close to the ferry terminal and within a short walking distance of the city wall. Restaurant. Bike rental. 80 rooms, $.

Visby Fängelse Vandrarhem (hostel), Skeppsbron 1, 621 57 Visby, ☎ 0498-206-050, fax 0498-205-110. Locally known as Sjumastarn, this hostel was built and used as a prison from 1859 to 1998. It has a great location close to the ferry terminal and close to the walled part of the city. Cottages also available. Café. Sauna. 28 rooms/cells and one apartment, $.

Where to Eat

During the high season there is a great variety of good restaurants and cafés, but the service is often not the best. With over 60 eating places open during the short summer season, there is often a staffing problem.

Barbecue Garden, on Strangatan 15, is a huge, pleasant garden with a varied menu, including the best, and most expensive, BBQ hamburger in town.

Clematis, on Strandgatan 20, offers a medieval setting, with vaulted, cellar-like rooms in a building dating back to the 13th century. This is one of the most popular and unusual restaurants in town. The medieval banquet is served by staff wearing period clothing. Set menu.

Donners Brunn, on Donners Plats 3, features friendly service and excellent food with a hint of France and a clear touch of Gotland; one of the best. Dinner only. The outdoor terrace bar is the place to see and be seen.

Gutekällaren, in Lilla Torgränd, faces the Stora Torget square and is set in a 12th-century building. It has a trendy interior and excellent food.

Isola Bella, on Södra Kyrkogatan 20, has the best Italian food in town, with both indoor and outdoor seating. Pizza is also available for takeout.

Munkkällaren, in Lilla Torggränd, is popular with the in-crowd and serves good food and drinks. Live jazz on Thursday evenings.

Rosas Café on St. Hansgatan 22 is a charming café with a delightful garden, serving breakfast, light lunches and all kinds of cookies, buns and cakes.

Värdshuset Lindgården, on Strandgatan 26, has the most beautiful garden setting on the island, if not all of Sweden, with a delightful menu and a great wine selection.

Gotland Specialties

Saffranspannkaka (more of a pie than a pancake) – served with local salmberry (similar to boysenberry) jam and cream.

Gotlands lamm – There are no sheep on the island; here they are called lamb. The lamb you dine on could actually be from New Zealand, though that is not really talked about.

Östersjölax – Baltic salmon, served smoked or with *gravad Kajp*, a kind of wild leek served in a sauce or most common as a soup.

Nightlife

Here, like most other places in Sweden, there are many restaurants and bars that double as nightclubs, and here, more than any other place in Sweden during summer, there is live entertainment by many well-known Swedish and international musicians almost nightly. The nightlife is young and lively and the lines are often long in front of the many nightspots, whether inside the city walls, down by the sea-front or around the island.

"THE BIG SIX"

These are the most popular nightclubs, all located in the center of Visby. Clubgoers in the know use the names shown in parentheses only.

Burmeister (Bur) – bar, restaurant, nightclub and a great garden.

Gutekällaren (Gute) – restaurant with 11 bars and four dance floors.

Hamnplan 5 – restaurant, nightclub, three dance floors, six bars, balcony.

Kallbadhuset (Kallis) – popular "after beach" spot and for late-night live entertainment.

Munkkällaren (Munken) – bar, restaurant, casino and nightclub.

Strandcompagniet – disco and pub.

■ Exploring Gotland on Wheels

The distance from Gotland's northern tip of Fårö to its southern tip Hoburgen is 170 km (106 miles) and across from east to west on the widest part is 52 km (32 miles). Being a rather flat island, it is ideal for bicycling. There are narrow and pretty country roads and

towns so small that they should all be called villages. The five largest towns after Visby have between 800 and 1,800 inhabitants. All around the island you will find sandy and pebbled beaches, rugged cliffs, colorful flowering roadsides and soft meadows mixed with leafy forests. Gotland's famous *raukar*, odd-looking limestone stacks created by nature, stand guard on the coastline.

Wildflowers are abundant in Gotland. Springtime and early summer is the best time to see flowers in bloom. There are brilliant blue viper's bugloss, later replaced by paler blue wild chicory and fields ablaze with red poppies – and orchids. Of the 40 varieties of orchids found in Sweden, some 35 grow here. Traveling around the island you will see many of the Gotland farms raising the original Gotland lambs, others raising dairy and beef cows, pigs and chickens. The most common crops are rye, potatoes and sugar beets.

You might also discover some Storrösen, bronze-age grave-mounds. There are 400 of them on the island.

We will be following more or less the Gotland bicycle trail that goes around the entire island and have divided the island in two parts, starting with the northern half. If you are planning to go by bicycle, you should plan on spending about a week on each half. Each "half island tour" is about 275 km (170 miles), depending on the routes chosen. Most of these routes can also be done by car and parts of them by local buses. If you are planning to stay just a few days, choose a shorter trip to one or two destinations on the island.

North Gotland

Routing: Visby - Lummelunda - Stenkyrka - Kappelshamn - Fleringe - Fårösund - Faro - Bunge - Rute - Hellvi - Slite - Gothem - Kräklingbo - Katthammarsvik - Östergarn - Gammegarn - Ardre - Ala - Sjonhem - Roma - Visby

Much of this northern coastline, called **Klintkusten**, is steep and rugged with many attractive little detours, like fishing villages where you can buy fresh or smoked fish, quiet places to take a stroll or go on a hike, as well as some more "touristy" places.

Five km (three miles) after leaving Visby at Nordeport (the north gate), heading north on Route 149, is Muramaris, an Italianite villa built in 1917 with a romantic history. A rich, married high-society lady ran away with the son's tutor, 20 years her junior. After roaming the world together for some time, the couple settled here and married; their home became a hub of artistic life. Against all expectations, their passionate love affair lasted all their lives. This place is not "very Gotland," nor is it one of the finest Italianate villas, but it is one of the most visited attractions on the island and a great love story.

A bit farther north, before reaching **Lummelunda** village, is **Lummelundagrottan**. At 2.6 km (1½ miles), it is one of Sweden's longest cave systems. A 30-minute guided tour is offered, but to really experience the underground you should sign up for "The Cave Adventure." These are limited to very small groups and must be booked in advance (☎ 0498-273-050 or lummelunda@grottan.se). Boots, coveralls, helmets and lamps are included, as well as expert cave guides. It's not recommended for those who are prone to claustrophobia. At the foot of the cliffs there are miles of pebbled beaches, the most common type of beach on this coastal stretch.

Pass by **Stenkyrka** village, a place where in the 11th century the first wooden church was built on the island. The little wooden church was replaced by a stone one (*stenkyrka* in Swedish) in the 12th century. A bit farther on, a detour to **Lickershamn** fishing village is recommended. From the small sandy beach, take a walk to the **Jungfruklint** rauk. At 12 m (40 feet), it is one of Gotland's tallest and strangest-looking limestone formations.

Idyllic **Kappelshamn**, with only 200 permanent inhabitants, is a pleasant stopover. The restaurant **Maven** (Gotland dialect for seagull), in the center of the village and a stone's throw from the ocean, is a great place for a meal, a snack or a drink. Then head toward Fårösund and the ferry to Fårö Island. Just before reaching Fårösund you will pass through **Bunge**, where you can stop. At the Bunge outdoor museum you will get an idea of what life was like during centuries of farming culture; they have an impressive collection of old farm buildings and rune and picture stones dating from to the fifth to 12th centuries.

During daytime the tiny car ferries from **Fårösund** to **Fårö Island** run every half-hour. Fårö (sheep island) is a must-visit while in Gotland. An easy one-day trip by car or bus from Visby, this little island has a most unusual and fascinating landscape, a barren expanse with sheep pastures, wide beaches, ancient limestone cliffs, scrawny pine trees and strange-looking limestone stacks. Ingmar Bergman, the world-famous movie director, lives here, but do not expect the locals to tell you where. This is a place where privacy is respected. Among the many places to explore is the tiny fishing hamlet of **Helgumannen**, popular for movie and commercial shoots, but in the height of summer it can be difficult to see the tiny fishing cabins due to the hordes of tourists stopping by.

Other places are **Digerhuvud**, a huge lime-stack-covered area and **Ulla Hau**, at the eastern part of the island, a nature reserve and Gotland's own mini-Sahara with fabulous sand dunes. However, what most summer visitors come here for are the fabulous beaches. **Sudersand Beach** is a clear favorite for sunworshippers from all over Sweden. It is a five-km (three-mile) beach with fine sand, rolling dunes and rather chilly (max temp 17°C/63°F), but swimmable, crystal-clear water. In the height

of summer, the area right in front of this excellent campground, hostel and cottage village is crowded. For more privacy, head for the ends of the long beach. Or try the always less crowded beach at **Ekeviken**, a bit north of Sudersand. It is a popular spot for windsurfers.

A personal favorite place to visit on Fårö is **Friggars Krog**, a white-washed seaside barn turned into a little restaurant that has excellent food and friendly service. Try their fish soup served with aïoli and home-baked bread. The restaurant is open after 5 pm from beginning of June to end of August.

Back on the main island after leaving this most enchanting and different little island, turn south at **Rute**, and before reaching Hellvi you will come to **Valleviken**, an ideal place for active outdoor enthusiasts. There are plenty of opportunities for sea kayaking, sailing, diving, fishing and even parachuting.

You will pass through **Slite**, an industrial and unattractive town where limestone is quarried, mainly for the production of cement. Continuing south, make a stop at **Gothem** to look at the church, where colorful original murals from the year 1300 were discovered and restored in the 1950s. The church bell from 1374 is known to have the finest chime in the country. Close to the church stands a castle and, just like many of the coastal churches, this one was also protected by a defense tower.

About two km (1.2 miles) south of **Kräklinbo** you have an opportunity to visit **Torsburgen Nature Reserve**, an inland limestone table-land with its highest point reaching 71 m (233 feet) above sea level. Here are the remains of what is believed to have been a large fortress, in use from about year 200 to 900.

Then you'll reach the beautiful Östergarn promontory and the cozy fishing villages **Katthammarsvik** and **Herrvik**. This is a nice area for a stopover, with pleasant hiking and biking trails, and where you can take a boat trip to **Östergarnsholm**, a tiny island with unique natural surroundings and one of the oldest lighthouses in Sweden. Do not miss a visit to **Rökeriets Restaurant i Katthammarsvik** for the outstanding "home-smoked" Baltic salmon. This will be the southern end of our North Gotland tour so, after a sunrise breakfast, head back toward Visby across the island on Route 143 via Ala.

Ala is known for **Konstnärsgården** (Artist House), with art exhibits and a wonderful restaurant. Then continue north via the village of Sjonhem to Roma. **Roma** was a cultural meeting place for hundreds of years and is now undergoing a revival. **Roma Kungsgård**, built as a residence for the county governor back in 1730s, today houses art and cultural exhibits and handicraft workshops. Do not miss the chance to take a look at the gardens. The most fascinating site here is the ruins of a Cistercian monastery. The Cistercian monks were asked to come here in

1164, and on this fertile ground they built a fine monastery and church. They were known for their vast knowledge of stone masonry, medicine and the art of writing. In the 1500s, the monastery, which had over 40 buildings, was abandoned and stood empty for over 200 years. During that time, the remarkable stone constructions were dismantled and used for building material for the Roma Kungsgård building and other structures. For the past 15 years the abbey ruins have been used as a fabulous summer stage for Roma Theater's yearly Shakespeare productions. From Katthammarsvik, it is 28 km (17 miles) to Roma and an additional 18 km (11 miles) to Visby.

Where to Stay

■ Kappelshamn

Kappelshamns Fritidsby, Flenvike Kappelshamn, 620 34 Lärbro, ☎ 0498-227-009, fax 0498-227-009, www.kappelshamn.com. Cottages with two apartments in each, only a stone's throw from the beach. Mini-kitchens, private terraces with BBQ grills. Pool, sauna, laundry room. 10 apartments, $.

■ Fårö

Sudersands Semesterby, Faro, 620 35 Fårösund, ☎ 0498-223-536, fax 0498-223-673, www.sudersand.se. Located right on Sudersand beach, it has well-equipped cottages in three different sizes. Restaurant, laundry room, BBQ grills on the grounds. Boule, mini-golf, tennis. Cottages (42), $, hostel beds (200), $.

Stora Gåsemora Gård, Fårö, 620 35 Fårösund, ☎ 0498-223-726, fax 0498-258-726, www.storagasemora.gotlandica.se. Apartments in an 18th-century building, cottages (of which one is a former windmill built in 1820). A quiet, friendly and laid-back place. 70 beds, $.

■ Valleviken

Vallevikens Stug & Konfernsanläggning, Valleviken - Rute, 62034 Lärbro, ☎ 0468-223-000, fax 0498-223-203, www.valleviken.com. Fully equipped apartments and cottages in different sizes with kitchens, located at pretty Valleviken Bay. Sailing, kayaking, diving, fishing and parachuting. 110 beds, $.

■ Katthammarsvik

Kalkpatronsgården Borgvik, Katthammarsvik, 620 16 Ljugarn, ☎ 0498-520-87, fax 0498-521-90, www.borgvik.com. This place dates back to the 16th century and is a nice mix of old and new buildings with apartments, cottages and rooms with kitchens. It has a beautiful setting on a promontory, with private beach and sauna. Café. 80 rooms, $.

Katthamra Gård, Katthammarsvik, 620 16 Ljugarn, ☎ 0498-520-09, fax 08-666-3397, www.katthamra.nu. The only true manor on the island,

with many old buildings. Cottages and hostel. The most unusual accommodations is the basic Häxans Hus, a cottage that looks as if it belongs in a fairy tale. Great breakfast buffet. 56 beds, $.

South Gotland

Routing: Visby - Tofta - Västergarn - Klintehamn - Fröjel - Hablingbo - Näs - Burgsvik - Vamlingbo - Hoburgen - Sundre - Hamra - Öja - Fide - Grötlingbo - Ronehamn - När - Ljugarn - Ala - Sjonhem - Roma - Visby

A soft and beautiful landscape with flowering meadows and leafy forests mixed with pine, an area where you can leave the main roads and discover the less-traveled smaller country roads of which some of the most beautiful are skirting the coast. Just after leaving Visby on Route 140, make a detour toward the sea and stop for the unequaled views at Högklint, a sea-cliff rising 45 m (148 feet) straight up from the sea.

Then, continue to **Tofta**, 17 km (11 miles) south of Visby, with the long and wide Tofta Strand, which is probably the most famous beach on the island and crowded in the height of summer. It is a wonderful, sandy beach with an adjacent pine forest. If you are looking for activities, this is a good place to spend a night or two. Close by, on the other side of the road, is **Vikingabyn** (the Viking Village), which is an attraction/theme park depicting life during the Viking era.

For a quieter place to stop over, continue south toward **Klintehamn** passing Västergarn with its enchanting seaside golf course on Kronholmen, and on to the little fishing hamlet of Kovik. This is a nice place for a stopover. Looking out at the sea from the Klintehamn harbor, you can see parts of a rusty shipwreck from 1983.

Continuing southbound, a stop in **Gannarve** and **Fröjel** is recommended. In Gannarve you can see a skeppssättning (ship launching). Skeppssättningar are grave sites from around 1000 AD. Amazing structures with stones lined up in ship formations, there are 350 of them on the island. The views from the highest point next to the Fröjel medieval church are outstanding and here you are close to the excavation area of an old Viking harbor. For those interested in riding horses, this area is a perfect stopover. Stay at **Gannarve Gård**, which has 40 horses and makes a four-km (2½-mile) side-trip in the direction of Lojsta. Look for the Russpark signs to find the small adorable Gotlands Russ horses that are roaming around.

> **Did you know?** The Gotlands Russ, first mentioned in writing during the 13th century, is the only Swedish horse that has been kept purebred.

Back on the coast, choose the road that is skirting the Eksta Kusten coast for exceptional views over the Karlsöarna islands, famed for their large colonies of guillemots and other seabirds that appear to rise out of the sea

as platforms. A bit farther south, before reaching the village of **Hablingbo**, you can turn west toward the seashore and skirt the coast, or continue south on Route 140 to visit **Gutevin**, Gotland's only wine producer. The island is trying hard to come up with new business ventures, and apparently alcoholic beverages are the latest trend. Gutevin was first with wine, of which the first bottles (white and rosé) came out in the fall of 2002. Gutevin is also producing distilled spirits that are somewhat similar to Grappa. Other future producers are trying to make rum out of sugar-beets and learning how to produce whiskey.

Whether skirting the coast or following Route 140, you cannot avoid seeing the ultra-modern windmills on **Näsudden** promontory. They are a beautiful sight to some eyes and an eyesore to others. Before coming over to Storsudret, you'll reach the narrow part of the peninsula that makes up the southernmost tip of Gotland. Called **Björkudden**, this is a nice place to make a stopover, or, if you want to continue your journey, keep going to a personal favorite spot, **Holmhällar**, on the southeastern side of the peninsula. In Holmhällar you will find peace and quiet, as well as one of the southernmost of the Gotland beaches. It has a pretty beach that is three km (two miles) long, with raukar (limestone stacks of rock), a nearby bird reserve, and a great place for sea kayaking. Björkudden and Holmshällar are both good places to set up base camp for a couple of days, and from here, explore this pretty peninsula and its often windy **Hoburgen**, the southernmost tip of the island. Here you will find the 4½-m (14-foot) **Hoburgsgubben** (the old man of Hoburgen), the most photographed rauk on Gotland. Do not miss the pretty west coast stretch just north of Hoburgen.

After resting up in Björkudden or in Holmhällar, it is time to go north to explore the southeastern side of the island. After leaving the peninsula, make a stop in **Grötlingbo** and take a look at the church. Note the beautiful stained glass and the murals from the 14th century. A nice place for a stopover is **Ronehamn**, which is a delightful little fishing village with a charming bright yellow inn.

Continuing north with new views and landscapes, as you approach När, the route passes areas resembling savannas. Upon reaching **Ljugarn**, the northern end of our South Gotland route, a stopover is definitely recommended. It is a favorite for many Gotland repeat visitors, and since the mid-19th century, it is the most popular seaside resort town on the east coast. Friendly Ljugarn village, with only about 100 permanent residents, has without a doubt one of the best beaches on the island. The little fishing hamlet Vitvär should be visited, as should the nearby nature reserve Folhammar, which has some interesting raukar.

A short distance north of Ljugarn is the long and always uncrowded **Arde Stranden** beach. Then head back toward Visby across the island on Route 143 via **Ala** and Sjonhem to **Roma** (see page 223-24).

Where to Stay

■ Tofta

Hotel Tofta Gården, Tofta, 621 98 Visby, ☎ 0498-297-000, fax 0498-265-666, www.toftagarden.se. One of the best hotels on the island, a wonderful location close to the beach, Tofta Gården is surrounded by forest and parkland. Tastefully decorated rooms. Renowned restaurant serving Gotland specialties. Outdoor pool, sauna. 25 rooms, $$$.

■ Klintehamn

Pensionat Warfsholm, 620 20 Klintehamn, ☎ 0498-240-010, fax 0498-241-411, www.warfsholm.se. This homestead dates back to the mid-1800s. It's now a charming inn and hostel set on a promontory, surrounded by the sea. Restaurant and café. Private beach. 150 beds, $.

Gannarve Gård, Fröjel, 620 20 Klintehamn, ☎ 0498-244-076, fax 0498-244-076, is four km (2½ miles) south of Klintehamn. A wonderfully relaxed place with a view, perfect for nature enthusiasts and those who are interested in horses. Rooms and cottages. Café. Horseback riding. 10 rooms, $.

■ Björklunda

Björklunda Hotel & Vandrarhem, Björklunda, 620 10, Burgsvik, ☎ 0498-497-190, fax 0498-290-490. This old homestead with several buildings is a great location for exploring the southernmost part of the island. Hotel rooms, apartments with kitchens and hostel. Restaurant and café. Open from mid-May to the end of Aug. 16 hotel rooms, $. Five apartments, $. 38 hostel beds, $.

■ Holmhällar

Pensionat Holmhällar, 620 11 Vamlingbo, ☎ 0498-498-030, fax 0498-498-056, www.holmhallar.se. A perfect get-away-from-it-all kind of place with basic accommodations. The hostel has a beautiful location in a pine forest, close to an outstanding three-km (two-mile) beach. Also cottages and hostel-type rooms available. Restaurant. Sauna. Many repeat guests. Kayak rentals nearby. 140 beds, $.

■ Ronehamn

Pensionat Gula Hönan, Ronehamn, 620 12 Hemse, ☎ 0498-482-940, fax 0498-240-450, www.resestugan.se. A charming bright-yellow inn with an old-style atmosphere and lush green garden in a genuine fishing village. Well-known excellent restaurant. Swimming pool, mini-golf, rowboat, bicycles all included. 25 rooms, five cottages, 16 hostel beds, $.

■ Ljugarn

Pensionat Lövängen & Frejs Magasin, Storvägen 62 & 53, 620 16 Ljugarn, ☎ 0498-493-011, www.ljugarn.com, offers wonderful accommo-

dations in historic buildings. The attractive white structures that make up Pensionat Lövängen have been here since 1925. Totally renovated in 1997, it is a comfortable place to stay. There are also a few cottages on the property.

Some 400 m (1,200 feet) down the road is **Frejs Magasin**. Built as a warehouse in 1898, this pretty yellow building was turned into a hotel in 1990. It also offers charming apartments. 100 beds, $.

Badpensionatet Ljugarn, Bollängsvägen 8, 620 16 Ljugarn, ☎ 0498-493-205, fax 0498-493-205, www.badpensionatet.se. Built as an inn in 1921, it was the first inn of its kind on the island. It has lots of atmosphere and friendly service. Nearby apartments with kitchens are also available. Excellent restaurant. Swimming-pool. 26 rooms, $.

The Province Of Öland

Öland, the second-largest of the Swedish islands, is situated in the Baltic Sea and is the smallest province in the country. It is reached by the magnificent Ölandsbron bridge, which links the island to the city of **Kalmar** on the mainland. This is one of the longest bridges in Europe, and is a true engineering marvel at 6,072 m (19,922 feet) long. In the summertime there are also ferry services from the mainland. Öland is a long and narrow island with vast sandy beaches and a unique landscape. Its vegetation is different from the mainland due to its chalky sandstone subsoil. Beautiful flowers are everywhere; some 400 odd-looking windmills scattered about, and there are many ancient historic sites.

Only about 25,000 people live here permanently. One of Öland's claims to fame is the incredibly rich birdlife, with migrating birds visiting in spring and in fall. However, the best-known visitors are the Swedish Royal Family, who have had their summer retreat here since 1905. Crown Princess Victoria celebrates her birthday here every summer on July 14.

■ Tourist Information

? The main tourist office for Öland, **Träffpunkt Öland**, is situated at the foot of the bridge in Möllstorp-Färjestaden, at 386 21 Färjestaden, ☎ 0485-560-600, fax 0485-560-605, www.olandturist.se.

■ Getting Here

By Air: From Stockholm, there are daily flights to Kalmar airport, then bus service to Öland.

By Train: From all major Swedish cities to Kalmar, then bus service to Öland.

By Bus: From Kalmar, there are hourly departures during daytime, less frequently during evening hours. From Stockholm, the Silverlinjen buses leave Stockholm Cityterminalen (by the railway station), stop in Kalmar and then in various destinations on Öland. SEK 250 one-way. www.silverlinjen.se.

By Car: Many major car rental companies have offices in Kalmar at the airport and the train station.

By Bicycle: In summertime, bicycles are not permitted on the Ölandsbron bridge. From mid-June to end Aug there is a popular free bicycle-bus called the "Cykelbussen." Contact the tourist offices in Kalmar or on Öland.

By Ferry: A car and passenger ferry runs from Oscarshamn (75 km/47 miles north of Kalmar) on the mainland to Byxelkrok on Oland. It's a nice two-hour cruise. www.olandsfarjan.nu.

■ Getting Around

To get the most out of a visit to Öland, a combination of driving, cycling and walking is recommended. There are local buses that crisscross the island, but their services are rather infrequent.

■ Sightseeing

Öland is 140 km (87 miles) long and no more than 16 km (10 miles) wide, with coastline of 500 km (310 miles). It is divided into a northern and a southern municipality, with about half of the population in each. Most tourists arrive here by car or bus. The first town you reach after crossing the Ölandsbron bridge is **Färjstaden**. It is a good idea to stop here to purchase a tourist map and to visit the **Historium** to learn about the island's history.

It is easy to navigate this island as there is only one major road, **Route 136**, which goes from the northern tip to the southern tip, with a few smaller parallel roads skirting the coastlines. A few small roads cut across the narrow island.

■ On Foot

There are many walking and hiking trails on the island. One of the most popular ones is the well-marked **Mörbylångaleden** trail, which starts at the Ölandsbron bridge and winds through the southern part of the island all the way to the Långe Jan lighthouse. The entire trail is 80 km (50 miles) and it is divided into four different sections. The trail passes through wildflower fields and farmlands. Keep your eyes open for what looks like rock-strewn terrain but could well be ancient grave sites. Contact the Tourist Office for information.

■ Golf

There are plenty of opportunities for golfers to play on some interesting courses spread out over the island. There is **Ekerum**, with its two 18-hole courses and full-service golf resort, and there is the pretty 18-hole seaside course in **Grönhögen**, as well as many more. See www.golfensoland.com or contact the Tourist Office.

■ Annual Event

Ölands Skördefest is a fall harvest with events all over the island. It takes place the first week in October. www.skordefest.nu, or contact the Tourist Office.

■ North Öland

Routing: Färjestaden - Ekerum - Halltorp - Borgholm - Sandvik - Lottorp - Byxelkrok - Grankullavik - Böda - Fora - Gärdeslösa - N. Möckleby - Färjestaden

The northern half of the island offers the most interesting natural surroundings, and also the most varied. This is farming country, with lots of dairy cows, pretty villages, forests and, as in the southern part, many wonderful swimming beaches. This is also where you will find the charming resort town of Borgholm, which, with only 3,000 inhabitants, is the capital of this island province.

After the stop at the tourist information office in Möllstorp-Färjestaden, we will start the Öland journey heading north on Route 136 to take a look at the most lively part of the island, at least during the summer season. Before reaching Borgholm, there are a couple of places worth a closer look.

Ismantorps Borg is a most impressive fortress dating back to the Iron and Viking ages, with the remains of a ring-wall six m (20 feet) thick and three m (10 feet) high. Inside the wall the remains of over 80 house "foundations" can be seen.

Next comes the village of **Ekerum**, which has two of the best golf courses on the island. After Ekerum is **Halltorps Hage**, a grove with magnificent giant oak trees that are hundreds of years old, as well as other virgin deciduous trees. This grove is a reminder of what southern Sweden's vegetation must have looked like some 5,000 years ago.

Borgholm

The touristy, but still pretty little town of Borgholm is 25 km (16 miles) north of Färjestaden and the bridge.

Turist & Resecentrum (Tourist Information Office), Sandgatan 25 387 31, Borgholm, ☎ 0485-890-00, fax 0485-890-10.

Exploring the Town

A small and friendly resort town, Borgholm is a pleasant place with cozy restaurants, small friendly shops and a pretty harbor that is especially busy in the summer. Many artists have recently moved to Borgholm and there are interesting galleries popping up all over town.

The most visited place on Öland is **Borgholms Slott**, left, the imposing castle ruins that tower over the little town. Fortresses and castles have stood on this site since the 12th century. They have been rebuilt and added onto over the centuries, and been fought over by Danes, Dutch, Swedes and the Hanseatic League. When the last service was held in the castle church in 1772, Borgholms Slott was still under construction. The castle was then plundered and fell into ruin. In 1803 parts of the dilapidated castle were turned into a clothing manufacturing plant with a dye-house. A fire broke out in the dye house in 1806, destroying what was left, and Borgholms Slott was abandoned. Today, the impressive castle ruins are used as a stage setting for concerts and various other open-air events. Borgholms Slott is open to visitors from April to Sept. In July, guided tours are offered. Concerts and various music events and art exhibits take place from June to mid-August.

Not far from here is **Solliden,** the royal summer retreat. The white Italianate mini-castle is not open to the public, but its lovely gardens welcome visitors for a small fee from noon to 2 pm during summer, even when the royal family members are here. There is also a pavilion featuring royal-themed exhibitions, a gift shop and a café on the premises.

After Borgholm, continuing north on Route 136 for about 10 km (six miles), you should make a stop at breathtakingly beautiful **Äleklinta**, a place where the geological build-up of Öland is visible. You can clearly see layers in the cliffs dating back millions of years. A bit farther north is **Knisa Mosse**, a peaceful marshland nature reserve set aside in 1931 to protect the unique birdlife. It's one of this island's preferred spots by many bird-watchers. From there, continue on 136 until Löttorp, then turn left toward Byrums Sandvik. On the way there make a stop at the **Hornsjön Lake**, the only real lake on Öland and also a nature reserve. Together with nearby **Horns Kungsgård**, the area offers rich flora and fauna and many pretty walking trails.

Byrums Sandvik is a fabulous little swimming cove with limestone pillars that are, as in Gotland, called *raukar*. From Boda, head for **Byxelkrok**, a nice stopover area for activity seekers. This is a little village with a pretty harbor, grocery stores and a great little restaurant called Sjökrogen.

ICELANDIC HORSES

From mid-June to mid-August **Alvagårdens Islandshästar** move their Icelandic horses from the Alva farm on the southern half of the island up north to Byxelkrok. They offer horseback riding in beautiful surroundings for beginners and experienced riders alike. Contact ☎ 0485-38-773, www.alvagardensislandshastar.se.

Byxelkrok is also a perfect area for divers and snorkelers. **Long Island Divers** (Long Island referring to the long narrow shape of Öland) is based here and offers equipment rental and diving courses for beginners and advanced divers. They also can provide basic accommodations with kitchens. Contact ☎ 0485-281-60, www.longislanddivers.com.

Byxelkrok is also where the ferries between the mainland and Öland dock and where boats depart for the amazing **Blå Jungfrun National Park**. This tiny and remarkable national park is a granite island rising 86 m (250 feet) above sea level with unique flora and fauna. There are many legends and mysteries connected to this island. According to the most famous legend, witches gathered here every year on Maundy Thursday. There are caves and a stone labyrinth to explore, all of which

are shrouded in mystery. But be aware that anyone who tries to remove a stone from the island will experience a lifetime of bad luck, or so the legend says. Only day-visits are permitted on Blå Jungfrun.

Just north of Byxelkrok you will find **Neptuni Åkrar** (Neptune's Fields), a vast rubble-stone field that in June and July is covered with wildflowers, most prominently the striking blue thistle. The lighthouse **Långe Erik** is 32 m tall (105 feet) and has proudly stood on the Ölands Norra Udde, the northernmost tip of the island since 1845.

For those interested in fishing, **Grankullavik**, a village set right on the a bay, is famous for pike and char fishing – the ideal place to set up basecamp. Close by is a wonderful nature preserve, **Trollskogen** (the troll forest), with pines twisted into bizarre shapes by the wind and covered with climbing wines. There is a marked trail of 4½ km (three miles) through this enchanted forest.

The **Bödabukten** bay is lined with long and pretty sandy beaches and close by is a grove of tall thuja pines brought over from North America in 1870. Continuing south on 136 you will get to **Källa Ödekyrka**, also called Källa Gamla Kyrka (Källa Old Church). Built in the 1100s, it is the best-preserved defense church on the island. It was the village church until 1887, when a new church was built. However, the popular old church is still being used for services during summer and is in high demand for summer weddings.

In **Föra**, turn into the unnumbered road that skirts the east coast of Öland and head toward **Kappeludden**, a very attractive promontory with a church ruin that is the remains of a chapel built for St. Birgitta in the 14th century. Here also stands an imposing three-meter (10-foot) stone cross from the 13th century and a bright red lighthouse that dates back to 1872.

Farther south, in **Gärdslösa**, stands one of the best-preserved medieval churches. Its oldest parts are from the 12th century, while the interior is light and beautiful with a mix of Romanesque, Gothic, Baroque And Rococo styles. For admirers of European royalty, this is where Princess Margareta of Sweden married John Ambler in 1964.

Close to Långlöts church, make a stop at **Himmelsberga**, a wonderful open-air museum where you will get a feel of Öland village life from a hundred years ago. In nearby **Lerkaka** stands a row of five picturesque windmills that, like the others on the island, are under historic protection.

In **Norra Möckleby**, turn west toward Färjestaden; en route you will pass **Gråborg**, the largest of Öland's fortresses and a fascinating sight. It was used to defend Öland from the Iron Age until the late 1600s.

Where to Stay in North Öland

Halltorp

Halltorps Gästgiveri, 387 92 Borgholm, ☎ 0485-580-00, fax 0485-850-01, www.halltorpsgastgiveri.nu. Situated nine km (5½ miles) south of Borgholm, this fashionable country inn has charm, comfort and originality. The rooms are tastefully decorated, most of them in the style of the different Swedish provinces. Health club, sauna, sun terrace and beautiful gardens. Close to excellent golf. The renowned, beautifully decorated restaurant here is one of the best in Southern Sweden. 36 rooms, $$.

Borgholm

Villa Sol, Slottsgatan 30, 387 32 Borgholm, ☎ 0485-562-552, www.villasol.just.nu. This small personable inn is centrally located just two blocks from the harbor and within walking distance of all Borgholm attractions. There's a pretty garden with plum and apple trees and a goldfish pond. Six rooms, $.

Byxelkrok

Hälluddens Stugby, 380 75 Byxelkrok, ☎ 0485-241-34, fax 0485-241-34, www.halludden.nu. Located four km (2½ miles) north of Byxelkrok, this is the place to stay if you want peace and quiet, but with access to a multitude of activities. There are well-equipped cottages with kitchens and a hostel set in an old manor building. 200 m (650 feet) from the ocean. Painting and pottery classes, fishing, boule, bicycles, sauna, BBQ grill and boats on the premises. Close to horseback riding, diving and golf. 33 cottages, eight hostel rooms, $.

Grankullavik

Grankullavik Semesterby, 380 75 Byxelkrok, ☎ 0485-240-14, fax 0485-240-16, www.grankullavik.com. This little cottage-village is right by the water and close to Trollskogen forest nature reserve (see page 233). Most of the cottages have sea views and are modern and well-equipped, with kitchens. Great fishing, especially in spring and fall. Bakery on the premises. 24 cottages, $.

■ South Öland

Routing: Färjestaden - Mörbylånga - Kastlösa - Degerhamn - Grönhögen - Ottenby - Segerstad - Stenåsa - Gårdby - Färjestaden

Today, this part of the island is most known for **Södra Ölands Odlingslandskap** (the Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland), which has been included in UNESCO's World Heritage list since 2000. It is made up of 56,000 ha (138,000 acres) – about a third of the island – of grazing and arable lands. People have tilled the land here for at least

4,000 years, and with the farming and stock raising, the usage of the land has remained more or less the same. Most of it is made up of **Stora Alvaret** (the Great Alvar Plain), a huge treeless limestone outcropping covered with wildflowers. It is also sprinkled with villages, windmills and ancient burial sites, plus wonderful hiking trails. However, long before this part of the island was added to the prestigious World Heritage list, it was famous as a bird-watchers paradise.

From **Färjestaden**, you can choose Route 136 that will take you straight to the southern tip of the island, but, if time permits, turn off 136 at **Skogsby** toward Road 946, which runs parallel with 136 and skirts the western coastline. Make a stop in **Bejershamn** to take a look at **Karlevistenen**, right, one of the most interesting Rhunestones in the country. It is still standing on the spot where it was erected by a Danish king about a thousand years ago. Between the old stone pier and the beach there are plenty of seabirds to observe and, nearby, along the beach, you will see some beautiful virgin leafy forest groves.

Cross over to Route 136 and head for the charming and idyllic village of **Vickleby**, famous for **Capellagården**, a design and art school for adults. It was created and founded by Swedish furniture designer Carl Malmsten during the 1950s. Students from around the world come here to work with wood, ceramics and textiles in a commune environment. There are art exhibits and sales from the beginning of June to mid-August. Don't miss the fragrant herb and rose gardens open from the end of April to mid-Sept.

A bit farther south stands **Resmo Kyrka**, a church from the mid-12th century with some remarkable wall paintings. Nearby is **Resmo Källa**, a prehistoric sacrificial spring. Between Vickleby and Resmo you can stretch your legs on a hiking trail called **Nunnedalen** (the nun's valley). It is a pretty and exotic trail with somewhat un-Swedish vegetation that reminds hikers of a more southern island. This is where Stora Alvaret begins, the ancient limestone plain that can be criss-crossed on many prehistoric trails. This is a place where you will travel back in time, a world away from today's stressful pace.

From Resmo you can turn off toward the west coast where **Mörbylånga** sits, the main town on the southern half of the island. However, there is not much for visitors to see or do there. Continuing south on 136 you will get to **Grönhögen**, which has an excellent seaside golf course. It is a nice place for a stopover, even for non-golfers. Nearby is **Eckelsudde**, a promontory that is a hang-out for adorable chubby seals and **Gettlinge**, with impressive Iron Age burial grounds.

Just south of Grönhögen, **Kung Karl X Gustafs mur** can be seen, a stone wall constructed in 1653 that reaches across the island from coast to coast. Why it was built is still being debated; some say it was to protect the imported royal deer herd, others say it was to protect the then newly planted oak trees from the local cows.

On the southernmost tip of Öland lies **Ottenby** with its world-famous **Ottenby Fågelstation** (bird station). Millions of birds pass through Öland during their yearly migrations. Some just fly by, but many do stopovers for various lengths of time and quite a few live here permanently. Of all the places to observe the rich birdlife on the island, Ottenby Fågelstation is the best-known and the most active. Since its beginning in 1946, this bird sanctuary has recorded 362 species. It's a great place to learn about our feathered friends. You have now reached **Ölands Södra Udde**, the southernmost tip of Öland, where **Långe Jan** stands – at 42 m (138 feet), this is Sweden's tallest lighthouse. Since 1745 it has been helping sailors and birds to find their way.

From here heading north, follow the unnumbered route that skirts the eastern coast of the island; just a few km up the road you will find **Eketorps Borg**, the ruins of a fortress built in three different stages between year 300 and 1300. This ancient fortress was not unearthed until the 1960s and 70s. It has now been partly reconstructed as a museum and definitely merits a visit. It is a good place to learn about life years ago, but is perhaps even more interesting for its ongoing reconstruction process. Then, just take a slow ride back north along the coast and enjoy the unique landscape, the pretty villages and breathe in the fresh sea air. When you get to **Gårdby**, either make a stop at the lovely inn of Eksgården or just turn left toward Färjestaden and the Ölandsbron bridge, which has proudly spanned the water between the island and the mainland since 1972.

Where to Stay in South Öland

Vickleby

Bo Pensionat, 386 93 Färjestaden, ☎ 0485, 360 01, fax 0485-362-54, www.checkpoint-oland.com. This small inn is a true gem in a storybook setting. Since 1914 this inn has been charm-

ing guests. The excellent restaurant serves regional specialties. Book well in advance. 25 rooms, $.

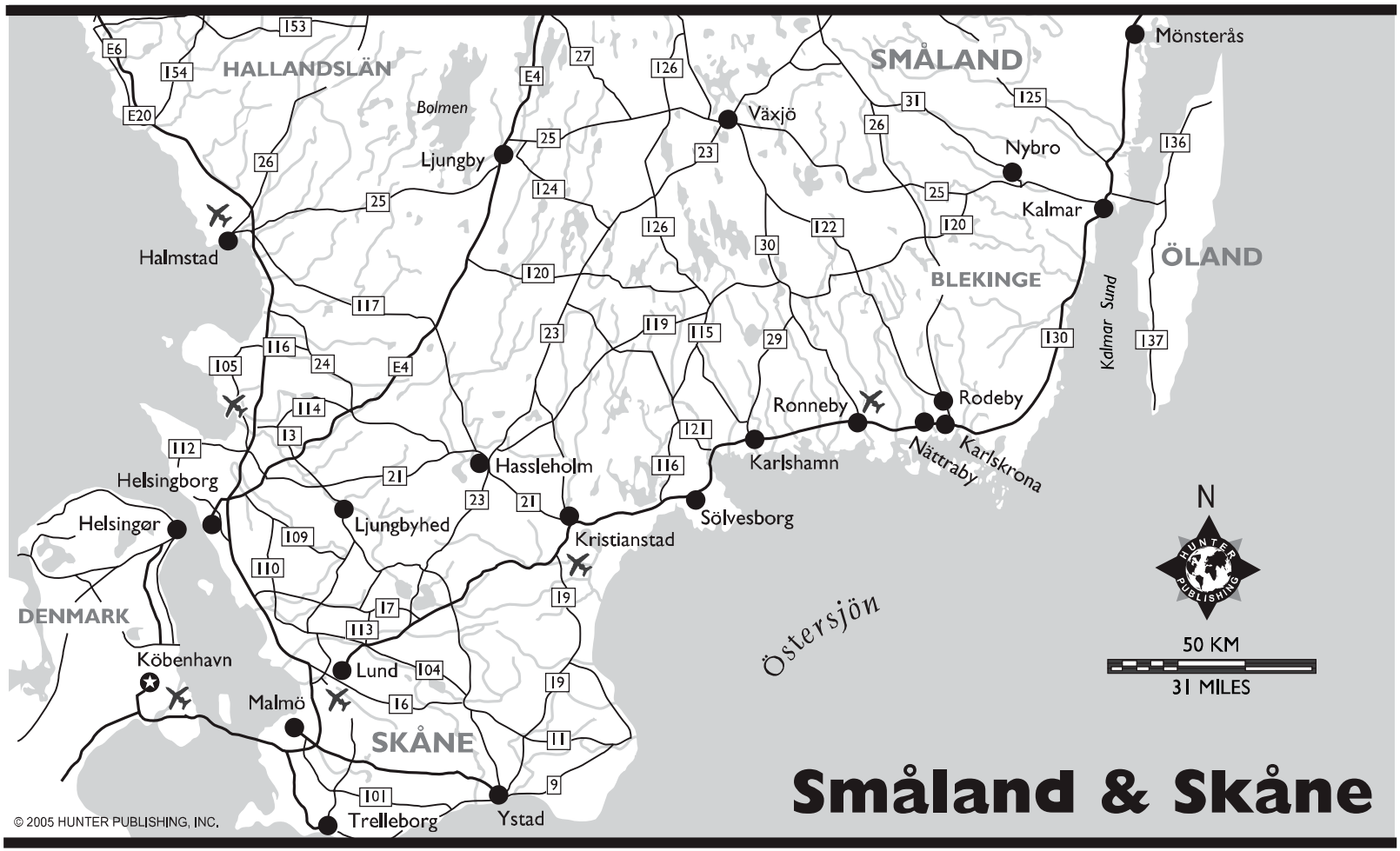
Grönhögen

Grönhögen, Golfvägen 1, 380 65 Degerhamn, ☎ 0485-665-995, fax 0485-665-999, www.gronhogen.se. This charming little golf resort is set right on an 18-hole seaside golf course; you do not have to be a golfer to like this friendly place. Some 50 km (31 miles) south of the bridge, it is an excellent location for exploring southern Öland. Restaurant. 17 hotel rooms and six timber cottages. $.

■ Where to Eat in Öland

There are plenty of places to eat, and, as all the towns and villages are small, you can't miss the restaurants. The commonality between them is pizza! Öland must have one of the highest pizza densities in the world, Rome included. There is hardly any restaurant on the island that does not feature this Italian specialty. If you are not looking for pizza, a couple of the best places to eat are **Halltorps Gästgiveri** and **Bo Pensionat** (see hotel listings). For those interested in cooking or who are on a budget, stay in a cottage, apartment or hostel with a kitchen and prepare your own meals. Öland is a fun place to do this, so just look for signs saying *gårdsbutik* or *gårdshandel* (farm shops) along the county roads to pick up the freshest and finest homegrown and homemade regional products of the land and sea. Also, do not miss **Rosas Handel** (a meat shop) in Löttorp for the greatest smoked sausages you have ever tasted.

If you are looking for restaurants serving Öland specialties, watch for *Regional Matkultur* signs (blue background with a chef's hat, a knife and a fork). The most popular traditional specialty is *kroppkakor* (dumplings made of potatoes and salt pork). Also try some of the newer inventions such as Öland chutney, one of the tastiest of which is made from tomatoes and strawberries.


HALLANDSLÄN
SMÅLAND
BLEKINGE
ÖLAND
SKÅNE
DENMARK
Bolmen
Kalmar Sund
Östersjön
Mönsterås
Växjö
Nybro
Kalmar
Ljungby
Halmstad
Helsingborg
Helsingør
Hassleholm
Ljungbyhed
Kristianstad
Sölvesborg
Karlshamn
Ronneby
Rodeby
Karlskrona
Nättraby
Köbenhavn
Malmö
Lund
Trelleborg
Ystad
N
50 KM
31 MILES
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Småland & Skåne

South Sweden: Småland & Skåne

In the province of Småland we will visit the towns of Kalmar and Växjö and the area between them called Glasriket. From there, we'll move on to the province of Skåne and the cities on the western coastline.

The Province of Småland

Småland, the largest of the southern provinces at 31,760 sq km (12,262 sq miles), is slightly larger than Maryland. Anyone traveling in this province will notice that, even though you are in the south, this is definitely the Nordic south, as evidenced by the densely forested areas of spruce and pine with swatches of oak and birch, stony fields, wetlands, and some 4,000 lakes. In this chapter we will be visiting the southeastern part of the province, where the two major Småland towns of **Kalmar** and **Växjö** are located, and most importantly where you will find **Glasriket**. Translated as the Kingdom of Crystal, this is home to the world-famous high-quality Swedish crystal. In this region the glassblowing tradition dates back to the 16th century, when King Gustav Vasa brought in artisans from Venice. To explore this part of Sweden, most visitors prefer to stay in Kalmar or in Växjö because good hotels in the Kingdom of Crystal are not easily found. However, there are cottages for rent there and also many hostels.

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Småland and its Kingdom of Crystal are not only about glass-making. This is also a center for producing high-quality furniture of innovative Swedish design. In addition, the area is known for its emigrant history. Of the well over a million of people (mostly peasants) emigrating to America from 1850 to 1920, about 20% were from this province. In Sweden, the true *smålänningar* (inhabitants of this province) are known for being resourceful and inventive, and for being tight with money.

■ Tourist Information

Småland Turism (Tourist Office), Västra Storgatan 18A551 11, Jönköping, ☎ 036-351-270, fax 036-351-289, www.visitsmaland.com.

■ Getting Here

By Air: Flights leave from Stockholm to Kalmar and Växjö. There are daily departures; flight time is 45 minutes.

By Train: The *kust till kust banan* (coast to coast) from Göteborg to Kalmar stops in Växjö. From Göteborg to Växjö is three hours (to Kalmar 3½ hours). From Stockholm to Växjö is 4½ hours (to Kalmar five hours)

By Bus: From Stockholm, the Silverlinjen buses, leaving Stockholm Cityterminalen (by the railway station), stop in Kalmar and then at various destinations on Öland. SEK 250 one-way. www.silverlinjen.se.

■ Getting Around

You will need wheels to get around in this region, preferably a rental car, as the glassworks and villages are scattered throughout the area. Bicycle, bus or train are less efficient alternatives. It is easy to find your way around. Just look for the brown-and-white signs in the towns, villages and along the country roads. They are put up specially for tourists, and point the way to all major points of interest.

■ Kalmar

The attractive town of Kalmar is situated on the Baltic shore just opposite Öland, on the mainland side of the amazing Ölandsbron bridge. This modest treasure of a town with a historic past is home to about 60,000 inhabitants, including the suburbs. It was an important border town back when the area south of Kalmar belonged to Denmark. However, in 1658, the southern provinces of Blekinge, Halland and Skåne became Swedish and Kalmar lost its importance for defending the border. It then became important for shipbuilding, shipping and trade. Today, it is known for its educational institutions and small industries.

Tourist Information

Kalmar Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), Ölandskajen 9, Gästhamnen 391 20, Kalmar, ☎ 0480-417-700, fax 0480-417-720, www.kalmar.se/turism.

Sightseeing

This walkable and charming town is dominated by its major attraction, the **Kalmar Slott**, a castle with an 800-year history. It was originally built as a fortress to defend Sweden from the Danes, as the border to Denmark was then just a few miles south of town. In the 16th century the Vasa kings, Gustav and his sons, Erik XIV and Johan III, changed it into a magnificent palace. Today it is a well-preserved Renaissance castle, complete with moats, dungeons, secret pas-

sages, and even a drawbridge. It is open daily from April to the end of August. English guided tours are offered in June and August at noon and 2 pm. In July, they are offered at 11:30 am, 2:30 and 3:30 pm.

Kalmar Slott

Next to Kalmar Slott is **Gamla Stan** (old town). In 1647 a fire destroyed almost all of it and, after the fire, the city fathers "convinced" the population to leave the area where they had previously lived and to settle in Nya (new) Kalmar on the island of **Kvarnholmen**. The old part became the summer playground for the wealthy and many quaint summer cottages were built here. Gamla Stan is a wonderful place for visitors to stroll around, with a maze of tiny cobbled streets and alleys flanked by brightly painted cottages, most of them in blue and yellow.

> **Tip:** Without a doubt, one of the most original places is **Kullzenska Caféet**, a must-visit both for its whimsical interior and also its wonderful cakes.

Stadsparken in Gamla Stan, close to Kalmar Slott, is a beautiful city park affectionately called *Kalmars gröna finrum* (the green living-room of Kalmar). The park was created from 1877 to 1888 through the generous donations of a wealthy local merchant, Johan Jeansson. It is planned like an English garden and boasts many exotic plants and trees. There is a restaurant in the park with a splendid water view.

The "new town" on Kvarnholmen island was planned and laid out around **Kalmar Domkyrka,** (the cathedral) on the Stortorget square, which is an impressive Italian Baroque church. It was founded in 1660 and consecrated in 1682, but the building was not completed until 1703. It bears witness to the time when Kalmar was an important border town, and is one of the few buildings still standing from that period. The three church bells and the beautiful pulpit were saved and brought over from the Storkyrkan church that burned down in the Gamla Stan fire of 1647. It is the only cathedral in Sweden with no bishop.

Just a couple of blocks from Kalmar Domkyrka on Skeppsbrogatan Street is **Kalmar Länsmuseum**, the county museum. Here there are various archeological and ethnographical collections, and the remains of the royal battleship ***Kronan***, which is twice as large as the *Vasa* (the ill-fated, royal warship that sank in 1628 on its maiden voyage. *Kronan*

sank in 1676 during a battle off the coast of Öland. Most of its crew of over 800 perished. The wreck was discovered in 1980 by a team of divers and new treasures are still being brought up from the ocean floor and added to the museum collection each year. Cannons, jewelry, the ship's bell, wooden statues, clothes and a large treasure of gold are on display; slideshows, models and reconstructions allow visitors to get a good understanding of what really happened.

Where to Stay

Slottshotellet, Slottsvägen 7, 392 33 Kalmar, ☎ 0480-882-60, fax 0480-882-66, www.slottshotellet.se. This little hotel enjoys a perfect setting close to the Kalmar Slott castle and the beautiful Stadsparken (the city park), within a short walking distance of the city center. Charming, individually decorated rooms are furnished with antiques and most have wooden floors. The hotel consists of four buildings, the main one dating from 1864. The restaurant serves breakfast year-round and is open for dinner during summer. 44 rooms, $$$.

Kalmarsund Hotel, Fiskaregatan 5, 392 32 Kalmar, ☎ 0480-181-00, fax 0480-411-337, www.kalmarsundhotel.se. This is a personal and friendly hotel with a "home" feeling, located in the center of Kalmar. The restaurant that also doubles as a sports bar serves Italian and American food. During the summer there is also an outdoor restaurant. 85 rooms, $$.

STF Vandrarhem & Hotell Svanen, Rappegatan 1, 392 30 Kalmar, ☎ 0480-129-28, fax 0480-882-93, www.hotellsvanen.se. This combined hostel and budget hotel offers good value for money, with basic, clean rooms. Shared areas include a TV room, a kitchen where you can cook for yourself and a sauna. Canoe rental. The front desk is open from 7:30 am to 9 pm. 63 hostel beds and 42 hotel rooms, $.

Stufvenäs Gästgifveri, 385 03 Söderåkra, ☎ 0486-219-00, fax 0486-218-68, www.stufvenas.se. Set in a nature reserve with unusual vegetation, 35 km (21 miles) south of Kalmar, this gem of a hotel occupies buildings dating back to the late 16th century. The restaurant blends French and Swedish cooking to perfection. Comfortable rooms. Health club, sauna and sun room on premises. Golf and swimming nearby. 55 rooms, $$$.

■ Växjö

Växjö, 109 km (65 mles) northwest of Kalmar and founded in 1342, is a bit larger than Kalmar. With 75,000 inhabitants, it is the second-largest city in Småland. It became a religious center when an English missionary came here, christened the people, and built the first church in town in the 12th century. Today it is a friendly, walkable city. The attractive cathedral with its two tall and impressive steeples is visible from everywhere and is one of the main tourist attractions. Other important sites are the Emigrants House and the Glass Museum.

Tourist Information

Växjö Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), Stationen, Norra Järnvägsgatan 351 12, Växjö, ☎ 0470-414-10, fax 0470-478-14, www.turism.vaxjo.se.

Sightseeing

Utvandrarnas Hus – The Emigrants' House opened in 1968 in memory of the 1.3 million Swedes who left their native country between 1860 and 1910, most of them for North America, with the greatest concentrationfrom 1846 to 1930. Most decided to leave because of shortages of food and their growing families, others for religious reasons, and some to join the Gold Rush. There is permanent exhibition, "The Dream of America," where you can learn about how the emigrants fared in the New World. Another permanent exhibit is dedicated to Wilhelm Moberg (1898-1973) and his famous series of novels, *Utvandrarna* (*The Emigrants*). His cabin is here, where the original manuscripts can be seen, along with the desk where, after 10 years of writing, he completed his epic saga in 1959. Yet another permanent exhibit is "The *Titanic*," where you will learn that, besides Americans, the largest national group on the passenger list was Swedish and, of the 1,500 that died in the dreadful disaster, many were Swedish emigrants.

> **Tip:** For those of Swedish descent interested in tracing their ancestry, this is the place to do it. The research center has the largest archive and library on emigration in Europe, and Sweden has kept excellent records of its citizens since the 17th century. The museum enjoys a nice location close by the Växsjön lake.

Close by is **Smålands Museum,** called **Sweden's Glass Museum**, with 500 years of glass history on display. Sweden became famous for its glass in the late 19th century. This is the largest glass collection in northern Europe. There is also an interesting exhibit called Industrious Småland.

The oldest building in town is **Växjö Domkyrka** (the Cathedral), dating back to the 13th century. It was built to honor Saint Siegfried, who christened the town in the 12th century. The remains of Saint Siegfried are buried under the cathedral floor. This impressive red building with its two tall green copper spires has been rebuilt several times over the years. Many works of art can be seen in the cathedral, the most striking of which is the unique altar screen in vibrant colored glass, metal and gold-leaf, designed by Swedish glass artist Bertil Vallien at Kosta Boda.

The beautiful building next to the cathedral is **Carloine High School**, which was attended by the world-famous botanist Carl von Linné and by Per Eric Ling, the "father of Swedish gymnastics," among others.

Where to Stay

First Hotel Cardinal, Bäckgatan 10, 352 30 Växjö, ☎ 0470-722-800, fax 0470-722-808, www.firsthotels.com, is located in the center of Växjö on the pedestrian street. The hotel features large, nicely decorated rooms and friendly, personal service. Restaurant. Gym, sauna and sun room. 115 rooms, $$.

Hotell Esplanad, Norra Esplanaden 21A, 352 31 Växjö, ☎ 0470-225-80, fax 0470-262-26, www.hotell-esplanade.se. This small hotel has a perfect location on a quiet street in the city center, and is a clean, friendly and basic spot. 23 rooms, $.

Villa Granholm, 360 32 Gremla, ☎ 0470-676-65, fax 0470-673-37, www.villagranholm.se, a stylish villa built in 1902, with beautiful surroundings, 15 km (10 miles) west of Växjö. Rooms are comfortable and two attractive dining rooms serve excellent food with an emphasis on Swedish specialties. The villa has lots of atmosphere and personal service. Croquet and boule on the premises, three 18-hole golf courses and canoeing nearby. 13 rooms, $$.

■ Glasriket – The Kingdom of Crystal

The region between Kalmar and Växjö is the best-known part of the province, generally known as Glasriket. It is a compact area set in the deep, dense Småland forests, with several small towns and villages containing world-famous glassworks. Most are open to visitors and you can see the glassworkers do their magic in front of the furnaces, turning glowing molten glass into crystal works of art. Most have shops and many sell slightly irregular goods at substantially reduced prices. Today, 15 glassworks remain in Sweden, 14 of them situated in this area.

Tourist Information

Glasriket Turism (Crystal Kingdom Tourist Office), Dunderbergsgatan 2 382 80, Nybro, ☎ 0481-452-15, fax 0481-457-00, www.glasriket.se.

> **Tip:** If you are planning to visit the area for a few days, it is a good idea to purchase a **Glasriket Pass**. With this card you will enjoy reduced admission rates to area attractions and lots great of discounts in the shops. It is sold at the tourist offices, the glassworks and at some hotels and hostels. Cost: 95 SEK.

Sightseeing

The Glassworks

Since the time of the Vikings, people have been producing iron in this area. During the 17th and 18th centuries new types of ironworks became the start of Småland's industrial era, but when they could not keep up with the demand for larger volume the producers were either shut down or forced into other types of businesses, such as wood, paper and glass. This marked the real beginning of glassmaking in this area. A very old art form, glass has been made for over a thousand years. The same ingredients are still being used: mixtures of sand, soda or potash and lime or red lead are used to form a ductile melt. Much has been done to improve the environment in the smeltries and to improve the quality of the glass. However, most of the tools and artisan skills used today go back hundreds of years. It is a mesmerizing sight to watch the glowing orange gobs being rolled and blown into beautiful forms.

> **Did you know?** It takes seven skilled craftspeople to produce one handmade wineglass? You will need a gatherer, a blower, a stem servitor, a gaffer, a foot servitor, a stem maker and an assistant.

Along **Route 25**, connecting Kalmar and Växjö, there are glassmakers at Pukeberg, Boda, Åfors, Skruf, Strömbergshyttan, Bergdala, and at Orrefors in Hovmantorp. There is also one place that does not produce glass, the Lessebo Handpappersbruk, which makes handmade paper.

Along **Route 28**, crossing Route 31 and about halfway between Kalmar and Växjö, there are the Johansfors, Sea and Kosta glassmakers. Along **Route 31**, starting in the town of Nybro, are Nybro, Orrefors, Carlos R. Pebaque in Gullaskruv, Mats Jonasson Målerås, and Lindshammar. Today, five of the area's glassworks belong to what is locally referred to as "the company," namely Orrefors, Kosta, Boda, Åfors and Sandvik-Orrefors in Hovmantorp. For several years they have been owned by Royal Scandinavia, which started out as the world-famous

Royal Copenhagen porcelain company and dates back to 1775. Added to this group of prestigious brand names under the Royal Scandinavia umbrella you will also find Georg Jensen and Holmegaard.

The other nine Crystal Kingdom glassworks are often referred to as "the free" glassworks. I have selected a couple of the big names and a couple of the smaller independent ones, all making fine, fun, beautiful and exciting crystal glassware, where designers and glassworkers cooperate closely. Most of these places are open to visitors year-round on Monday through Friday from 10 am to 6 pm, Saturdays and Sundays from 11 am to 4 pm (in July and August there are extended hours). In July, most of the employees are on vacation, but some are still working for the benefit of the tourists.

The **Kosta Boda** brand goes back to when Kosta glassworks was founded and the first batch of glass melted in 1742. Today it is the oldest glasswork in Sweden still making handmade glass. The name Kosta was derived from the names of its two founders, Anders Koskull, "KO," and Stael von Holstein, "STA." This is one of the largest glassworks, with some 80 employees. Today, 10 talented designers have their studios here. There is an exhibition hall, a museum, several old buildings and a restaurant on the premises. The Kosta Boda brand was created in the mid-1980s and consists of Kosta, Boda and Åfors glassworks.

Orrefors, founded in 1898, is famous for its timeless design and its creative artists and craftsmen. For over a century Orrefors has been making attractive items for everyday use as well as eye-pleasing objects of art. Many new techniques were born here, such as Ariel, Graal and Ravenna. Ten designers are directly affiliated with Orrefors. Glass sold under the Orrefors name is produced at Orrefors and Sandvik-Orrefors in Hovmantorp. There is an excellent museum and restaurant on the premises.

Mats Jonasson Målerås was founded under of the name Målerås in 1890. Today, the best-known pieces produced here are Mats Jonasson's fabulous animal reliefs in crystal. They can be found in fine stores all over the world, but here you can also find some unique pieces created by artists Erika Höglund, Klas Göran Timbäck and Mats Jonasson. Mats Jonasson, in addition to being a great artist, is now the major shareholder of Målerås. Mats is a unique person who was born and raised in Målerås. He has always lived there and he rarely travels. Soft-spoken and low-key, he is passionate about his village, about ani-

mals and about nature. He was the driving force in saving Målerås glassworks when it was threatened with closure in the late 1970s. Mats and 13 locals pooled their resources, a total of Swedish Kronor 250,000, got a bank loan, got 100 additional local shareholders and, in 1981, the glassworks of Målersås was saved by this Swedish Robin Hood and his villagers. There is a wonderful exhibition hall and a restaurant on the premises.

In the picturesque village of **Gullaskruv**, visit **Carlos R. Pebaque**, a talented father-son team from Uruguay who settled in this little village in 1984. Carlos has developed a special patented technique called CARA for painting glass. It is a joy to see him work and to look at each unique piece he creates – a perfect blend of Swedish classic styles and his colorful Latin temperament.

In the village of Lessebo, at the **Lessebo Handpappersbruk** you can follow the entire process of making handmade paper. Lessebo started making paper in 1693, and it has been made the same way since then. Every day about 15 kg (33 pounds) of handmade paper is produced at Lessebo. If modern machines were being used it would take less than a second to produce the same amount.

Where to Stay

Ljuders Vandrarhem STF (hostel), Grimsnäs Herrgård, 360 53 Skruv, ☎ 0478-204-00, fax 0478-204-00, www.ljudersvandrarhem.bizland.com. This hotel is set in an old manor house with roots in the 16th century. Very pretty surroundings. 70 beds, $.

Ormeshaga Country Club, 360 51 Hovmanstorp, ☎ 0478-409-40, fax 0478-401-95, www.ormeshagacountry.se. This is a "country club" Småland-style, set in the heart of the Kingdom of Crystal. Several chalets spread out on the shores of a pretty lake. In the manor house there is a small dining room with meals served upon request. There is also an excellent spa with a pool and a sauna offering various body and beauty treatments. Lots of fishing opportunities are available, with or without a guide. The charming owners, Anita and Jonny, give lots of personal attention to their clients. Eight cottages, $.

Where to Eat

For adventurous eaters, **Hyttsill** (glassworks herring) is a must. Hyttsill is the word used for a traditional evening meal that dates back to the time when the glassworks were the central point in each village. People came here to seek warmth from the furnaces and, when the workday was over, the furnaces were used to prepare meals. Herring, sausages, potatoes and bread were baked in the cooling

embers of the glass furnaces. Wandering vagabonds stopped by and told stories about what they had seen and heard in the neighboring villages. Sometimes an accordion player or a singer entertained. This old custom has been re-created and, today, when the workers leave for the day, long tables are set up in the smeltry and meals are prepared according to tradition and served to tourists. Items include herring, potatoes, spicy isterband sausage, salt pork, lingonberry jam and, for dessert, the traditionally rich curd cheesecake served with strawberry preserves and whipped cream. The glassworks in the area take turns serving up the feasts. Contact them, hotels or tourist offices for places, dates and reservations.

■ Exploring the Area Around Glasriket

For an opportunity to get really close to a moose or two, visit **Grönåsens Älgpark** (Moose Park) in **Kosta**. There is a walkway of 1,300 m (nearly a mile) with lookout towers. Don't miss the Moose Shop, which has an amazing range of moose products; you can even purchase a couple of delicious moose meat hot dogs to be grilled over the open fires.

Five km (three miles) north of Växjö you will find **Kronobergs Slott**, a picturesque castle ruin on a small island in the Helgasjön Lake. The castle dates back to the 14th century and it has been used for various purposes, among them being a residence for the bishops of Växjö.

Furniture is one of Småland's most famous exports and in **Lammhult**, 40 km (25 miles) north of Växjö on Route 30, you will find **Möbelriket**, the Kingdom of Furniture. This is the center for Swedish furniture design and there are over 13,000 square m (140,000 square feet) of designer furniture in stores such as Norrgavel, Nilssons, Svenssons and, the most famous of them all, Lammhults Möbel. They all ship internationally.

> **Tip:** Halfway to Lammhult, about 20 km (12 miles) north of Växjö, lies **Johanssons Lantcafé**, a friendly old-style village shop and café – it's the perfect place to stop for a cup of freshly brewed coffee or for a meal.

At **Kyrkö Mosse** in **Ryd**, 70 km (43 miles) south of Växjö at the junction of Route 119 and 120, is a most bizarre car cemetery from the 1950s where hundreds of cars were abandoned deep in the moss-clad forest just south of Ryd. The cars began to sink into the peaty bog and trees and plants sprouted up in and around them. This

area of rusty metal is Europe's only car cemetery, now historically protected and a perfect photo opportunity.

There are many hiking and biking trails in this area and an abundance of good cycling and hiking maps are available at the tourist offices. Some are free.

On Water

The waterways and lakes in the area are clean and plentiful with lots of canoeing and fishing opportunities. Why not try fly-fishing for trout in the River Alsterån? Boat and equipment rental and fishing packages, including accommodations, are available. Contact **Strömfiske Alsterån**, ☎ 0481-633-66, www.alsteran.com, or contact the tourist offices.

Annual Event

Musik i Glasriket is a nine-day music festival with music, song and dance. Performances take place at some 40 different locations in the Kingdom of Crystal from the end of July to the beginning of August. Contact Glasriket Turism (Crystal Kingdom Tourist Office) or visit www.musikiglasriket.se.

■ Heading South

South from Växjö, Route 23 will take you to the province of Skåne and there are a few places of interest along the road. For opera buffs, a visit to **Snugge**, the birthplace of Swedish opera prima donna Christina Nilsson, 1843-1921, could be of interest. Snugge is 15 km (nine miles) south of Växjö; just follow the sign for "Christina Nilsson's birthplace" posted on Route 23.

After another 12 km (7½ miles) on Route 23 you will find **Huseby Bruk**, a former foundry. This enormous property consists of a castle-like manor house dating back to 1844, fully furnished with antiques, and a variety of buildings made into museums. There is also a stable building turned restaurant that is a nice stop for a meal. The entire property was bequeathed to the Swedish state in 1979. The generous donor was Miss Florence Stephens, whose long life was surrounded by scandals.

THE SCANDALOUS MISS STEPHENS

Florence Stephens inherited Huseby in 1934. She never married, but had a weak spot for royalty and other members of the aristocracy, surrounding herself with financial "advisors," who did not have her best interests in mind. To save Huseby from financial ruin, she signed a

declaration stating that she was incompetent. For 20 years thereafter, she struggled to get the declaration revoked. Her rumored royal father, her weakness for blue-blooded male friends, her financial problems and the battle to revoke her declaration all made headlines in the Swedish media for half a century, until the day she died in 1979 at the age of 98. Her life's destiny is something to ponder as you walk the beautiful grounds.

If interested in plants, trees and flowers, 13 km (eight miles) before reaching the town of **Älmhult** you will find Råshult, where botanist Carl von Linné was born in 1707. Follow the signs posted on Route 23. This is where his lifelong passion for botany started. Älmhult is where the world-famous furniture maker IKEA was founded in 1943, starting out as a mail order company. Creator and founder Ivar Kamprad's first store, opened in 1958, is located here and is a popular tourist destination. Today the company is headquartered in Denmark and the Kamprad family resides, like many other wealthy Swedes, in London.

Leaving Älmhult, continue south on Route 23 and after a couple of miles you will enter the southernmost Swedish province: Skåne.

The Province of Skåne

Since the year 2000, the southernmost province of Sweden has been directly linked with neighboring Denmark and with the continent via the Öresundsbron bridge. You can now drive from the Mediterranean to the top of Scandinavia with Malmö, the largest city in Skåne, as the halfway point. This small province boasts the highest population density in Sweden, with 99 people per sq km. Compare that with the northernmost province of Lappland, which has only one person per sq km. Skåne also has more golf courses per sq km than any region of Scandinavia.

The locals will tell you about their varied landscape, but the truth is that it is rather flat. The highest point is only 212 m (695 feet) above sea level, which makes it a bicycle-friendly place. And it has a pretty summer landscape with beautiful green beech forests, long sandy beaches and vast fields in all hues of yellow. The rich farmland with its fertile plains has always been known as **Sveriges Kornbod** (the granary of Sweden). The area is dotted with small churches, some 300 of them in all. There are almost as many castles and stately manor houses, many dating back to the 14th and 15th centuries and most still privately owned. About 30 are open to the public, some turned into hotels and restaurants.

After hundreds of years under Danish rule, in 1658 Skåne became part of Sweden and the nobility was quick to accept the new Swedish rule; those

who promised to be loyal to the Swedish crown could keep their castles. Known as "Castle Country," it is a superbly romantic destination.

> **Tip:** Check the good official Skåne website at www.skane.com.

■ Getting Here

By Air: From Stockholm to Malmö's Sturup Airport.

By Train: From Copenhagen Airport and from all major cities in Sweden, Norway and Denmark.

By Boat or Ferry: From Denmark and Germany.

By Car: Via Öresundsbron from Denmark and over land from all points in Sweden.

■ Getting Around

Visitors can get around by rental car, bus or by train. Driving from Växjö on Route 23 in Hässleholm, continue on Route 21 east, which will take you to the west coast of Skåne and directly to the fabulous city of Helsingborg.

> **Did you know?** The town of Åhus, about an hours drive north of Malmö, is the only place in the world where the famous Absolut vodka is produced.

■ Outdoor Activities

Golf

Golfers will be in seventh heaven here. With a last count of 62 golf courses and a mild seaside climate, most courses can be played throughout the year. *Golf Digest* readers voted for the best 27 holes in Sweden; 11 of those were in Skåne. Contact www.skaneturist.com for a listing, or call any area tourist office.

Sea Kayaking

This southernmost province is surrounded by three bodies of water: the **Kattegatt**, the **Öresund**, and the **Baltic Sea**. It is perfect for experienced sea kayakers, as there is no archipelago offering protection from the open seas. Contact any of the tourist offices.

Hiking

Skåneleden, a 900-km (558-mile) hiking trail, starts here, near Malmö. Don't worry, it is cleverly divided into 70 one-day hikes. Contact the tourist offices for maps and information.

WHAT TO EAT

Skåne's cuisine is famous throughout Sweden; the countryside is sprinkled with Gästgivaregårdar (old hostelries), where you will find restaurants in castles, manor houses, and, in the cities, in new and modern settings. The people of this province have always been devoted to food and have a special relationship with their traditional fare. The famous Swedish **smörgåsbord** originated here.

Skåne has its own special cake, **spettkaka**, a sweet towering cake made with massive amounts of eggs and sugar, cooked on a spit over an open fire. Another Skåne specialty is the traditional **Mårten Gås feast** in fall, where **svartsoppa** is served, a dish made of goose blood, followed by roasted geese. Another traditional Skåne feast is the **Ålagille**, where eel in every form is served: fried, boiled, grilled and smoked. It all goes down easier with lots of local **Skåne akvavit** (schnapps) or some **Absolut vodka**.

■ Helsingborg

Formerly spelled Hälsingborg, the city is situated 185 km (115 miles) southwest of Växjö. It is the second-largest city in Skåne, with a population of 120,000 and growing. This is a "feel good" city and a nice place to stay for a couple of days. After the opening of the Örsundsbron bridge, Helsingborg lost its claim as the gateway of Sweden to Malmö, but the locals are quick to point out that it was to Helsingborg that Jean Baptist Bernadotte came by ferry in 1810. Arriving from France, he became the King of Sweden and the founder of the present royal family.

Tourist Information

Helsingborgs Turistbyrå (Tourist Office), Södra Torg 1, 25112 Helsingborg, ☎ 042-104-350, fax 042-104-355, www.visit.helsingborg.se.

Sightseeing

Everything is within walking distance in this pleasant town. The Neo-Gothic **Stadshuset** (the Town Hall), at right, built in 1897, should be visited for its stained-glass windows depicting the history of Helsingborg. Guided tours are offered during the summer months.

Taking up an entire city block is the **Sankta Maria Kyrkan** church on Södra Storgatan, one of the two structures that remain from the pre-Swedish time. It was built in sandstone during the 12th century, and then rebuilt with brick in the 14th century following north German designs. The interior is interesting and beautiful.

The second structure predating Swedish rule is the defense tower **Kärnan** (the Keep), which is over 900 years old. This tower is the only remaining part of the former 14th-century fortress known as Helsingborg Castle, which was torn down in 1680. From the top of the 35-m (115-foot) fortified tower you can see Denmark. The tower walls are 4½ m (15 feet) thick. Today, a wide staircase leads up to the roof terrace (there is also an elevator). The site of the former fortress has been turned into a lovely public park.

On Norra Storgatan street stands the carefully restored **Jacob Hansens Hus**, the city's oldest privately owned house, a brick and timber structure dating back to the 17th century. The fountain in front of the house was placed there in 1927 and shows the 16th century astronomer Tycho Brahe. **Norra Hamnen** (the North Harbor) is worth a visit. It's a newly spruced up area of the city with a nice marina and a multitude of stylish bars and eateries.

Where to Stay

Elite Hotel Marina Plaza, Kungstorget 6, 251 10 Helsingborg; ☎ 042-192-100, fax 042-149-616, www.marinaplaza.elite.se. Located right by the harbor, this large and modern hotel offers good service and all amenities. The hotel has a popular restaurant, pub and a nightclub. Don't miss ordering a "Madam" in the lobby bar. This was the winning cocktail in the 1999 World Cocktail Championship, and it was invented here. 190 rooms, $$$.

Alberga Herrgård, Långebergavägen 85, 256 69 Helsingborg, ☎ 042-296-810, fax 042-296-810, www.albegaherrgard.com. This is a special place, a true gem at the outskirts of Helsingborg. The manor was built in 1850 and is set in a lovely beach park. Rooms are tastefully and individually decorated with all amenities. Personal and friendly service. Six rooms, $$.

SVIF Vandrarhem Villa Thalassa (hostel), Dag Hammarskjöldsväg, 254 33 Helsingborg, ☎ 042-210-384, fax 042-128-792, www.villathalassa.com. The hostel is situated three km (two miles) north of the city center. Accommodations are in cabins and cottages in a pretty park setting close to a forest and with a view over the water. The main building, the "Villa," was built in 1903. 172 beds, $.

Where to Eat

Gastro on Södra Storatan is where the locals head for a special evening out. The restaurant offers an interesting blend of Skåne, Provence and Tuscany in the well-prepared dishes. **Olsoni's Skafferi** on Mariagatan serves great Italian food.

Exploring the Area

Route 111 will take you north to the **Kullahalvön**, a peninsula with seaside resorts and castles. Right after leaving Helsingborg you will find **Sofiero Slott**, a castle built by King Oscar for his wife Sofia in 1864. Later, it was given to his grandson, King Gustav VI Adolf, who used it as his summer palace until 1973. It is now owned by the Swedish State, and the beautiful gardens stretching all the way to the water's edge are open to the public.

On the peninsula is **Höganäs**, a small town with an old tradition of making pottery. A good place to visit is **Keramikens Hus**, where many potters of the region exhibit their art. There is also an outlet store called **Höganäs Keramik**. Nearby is the controversial **Nimis** sculpture, made out of 250 tons of driftwood and stone and still growing.

On the tip of the peninsula is **Mölle**, an affluent little town with a pretty harbor and beautiful old houses. Not far away stands the highest-elevation **lighthouse** in Sweden, 180 m (590 feet) above sea level on a promontory of gneiss formed during the last Ice Age. Straight across the water from Helsingborg is the Danish city of **Helsingör** (Elsinore), with its **Kroneborg Castle**, home of Shakespeare's prince Hamlet and only 20 minutes away by ferry.

■ Landskrona & Ven

Heading straight south from Helsingborg for 25 km (15 miles) you will reach the town of **Landskrona**. From here a little ferry leaves regularly for the tiny island of **Ven**, situated in the narrow Öresund strait between Sweden and Denmark. On the Ven side, next to the ferry landing, you can rent a bike, which is the best way to get around on the island. It was on this island that the temperamental Renaissance mathematician and astronomer Tycho Brahe (1546-1601) built his remarkable observatory in 1584. Visit the recently opened **Tycho Brahe Museum** to learn about this most unusual man and his discoveries. The nearby **Tycho Brahe Gardens** reopened in 1992 and have been reconstructed following the original Renaissance gardens' plan.

Tycho Brahe

■ Lund

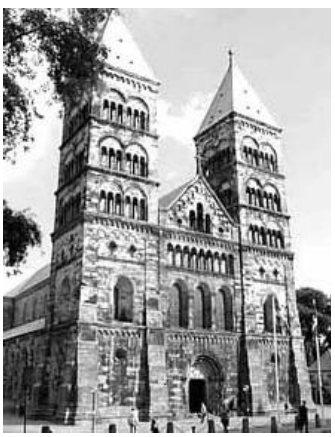
Back on the mainland, continue another 34 km (21 miles) southeast of Landskrona to reach the charming university town of Lund, a walker-friendly place with cobbled streets and one of the best-kept medieval town centers in Sweden. This town is home to a 300-year-old university, with 30,000 students making up a large part of the town's 90,000 inhabitants.

Tourist Information

Lunds Turistbyrå (Tourist office), Kyrkogatan 11222 22 Lund, ☎ 046-355-040, fax 046-125-963, www.lund.se.

Sightseeing

The beautiful **Lunds Domkyrka** was built just after Skåne was christened in 1080, at a time when Lund was an important religious center. Protestantism took over from the Catholic church 500 years later, and the Romanesque cathedral became a Lutheran church. The main attraction is an amazing 14th-century astrological clock, but the church organ, the largest in Sweden, is also worth a look.



Nearby, on Karolinaplatsen, is an amazing museum, **Kulturen**, which actually is more like a tiny town, with indoor and outdoor exhibits from Sweden and other parts of the world in some 30 houses and gardens brought here from all over Sweden. This is a place where you can easily spend an entire day.

Not far from the cathedral and from Kulturen on Finngatan street, you will find **Skissernas Museum** (the museum of drawings), home to thousands of works by many artists, among them Léger, Picasso, Matisse and Chagall.

Where to Stay

Grand Hotel, Bantorget 1, 221 04 Lund, ☎ 046-280-6100, fax 046-280-6150, www.grandilund.se. On the Bantorget square stands this grand old lady, dressed in pinkish red, with lots of old-world charm and newly renovated comfortable rooms. The restaurant places emphasis on local dishes, and combines them with a great wine list. Sauna. 84 rooms, $$.

STF Vandrahem Tåget (hostel), Vävaregatan 22, 221 04 Lund, ☎ 046-142-820, www.trainhostel.com. Close to the railway station these

accommodations are housed in old railroad cars. For non-claustrophobics it is a fun and unusual way to spend a night or two. 108 beds, $.

Häckeberga Slott, 240 13 Genarp, ☎ 040-480-440, fax 040-480-402, www.hackebergaslott.se. Situated 20 km (12 miles) from Lund and 30 km (18 miles) from Malmö, this legendary manor enjoys a picture-perfect setting on a small, private island. It has been owned by the same family since 1828. The present building dates back to 1875. Spacious, comfortable rooms are combined with warm and friendly service. The renowned restaurant serves excellent food, with seasonal menus offering fish and game from the estate. 19 rooms, $$$.

Where to Eat

Bantorget 9, on Bantorget 9, is a charming restaurant with old fashioned atmosphere set in three small buildings dating from 1816-1864. With great food and service, this is a favorite among the locals.

Grand Hotel, see above under *Where to Stay*.

Exploring the Area

Dalby Söderskog National Park, 10 km (six miles) outside Lund, resembles more southerly forests and is best visited in spring and early summer when the ground beneath the trees is covered with brightly colored flowers.

Steve's Western Riding is in Genarp 17 km (10 miles) from Lund, where you will find American cowboy Steve, who has lived in Sweden for 15 years. This is a perfect place to discover the southern countryside on horseback. In addition to the riding, Steve also offers great B&B accommodations. Contact Steve at ☎ 040-441-163 or find more information at www.westernriding.com.

■ Malmö

Another 25 km (15 miles) south of Lund is the provincial capital, **Malmö**, which, with 250,000 inhabitants, is the largest city in Skåne and Sweden's third-largest. It lies straight across from Copenhagen and is directly connected to Denmark via the Örsundsbron bridge. Malmö was founded in the 13th century and became an important Danish town. It was prosperous during the 14th and 15th centuries, when it traded with the Danish islands and the Hanseatic League. During the 16th century, until 1658 when Sweden took over, Malmö had almost the same stature

as Copenhagen. Today, the city offers an attractive medieval center with many pedestrian streets, beautiful green areas and a picturesque harbor.

Tourist Information

Malmö Turisbyrå (Tourist Office), Centralstationen (the railway station), 211 20 Malmö, ☎ 040-341-200, fax 040-341-209, www.malmo.se.

Sightseeing

This likable, bustling city has a cozy city square, a number of attractive buildings, and pleasant city parks. Best of all, most places of interest are within easy walking distance from one another. The main attraction is **Malmöhus Castle**, built in the late 1400s and early 1500s. It saw its best days in the 16th and 17th centuries. Today it is home to many of Malmö's museums: the **City Museum**, the **Natural History Museum**, the **Art Museum** and, just across the street, the **Science and Maritime Museum**.

Adjacent to the castle you will find **Kungsparken** and **Slottsparken**, two parks with exotic trees, herb and flower plantations, and a cozy café. Another beautiful park that should not be overlooked is **Pildammsparken**, the largest landscaped park in Sweden and a popular getaway for local urban dwellers. This park was established in 1914 in connection with the Baltic Exhibition.

Abba in Stortorget Square

Not far away from Malmöhus castle and in the center of old town is **Stortorget Square**, already an important and large market square in the 16th century. Here you will find the impressive **Rådhuset** (the town hall), built in 1546. It got its present Dutch Renaissance look in the 19th century. The vaulted cellar from the original building remains and is today a restaurant, appropriately called Rådhuskällaren (the town hall cellar). Just a few steps away, at the corner of Kalendergatan and Själlbogatan streets, stands **Sankt Petri Kyrka**, a church built in the 14th century in Baltic Gothic style. The altar dates from 1611 and, at 15 m (49 feet), is one of the highest in Europe. This impressive church stood here to bear witness to the spread of Protestantism throughout the country, which started in Skåne.

A personal Malmö favorite is **Fiskebodarna**, a cluster of tiny red wooden fishing shacks, painstakingly restored some 15 years ago. It's a great place to see and to buy the catch of the day.

Where to Stay

First Hotel Garden, Baltzarsgatan 20, 203 11 Malmö, ☎ 040-665-6200, fax 040-665-6260, www.firsthotels.se. Perfect location in the city center. Comfortable rooms in attractive settings, surrounded by flowering roof gardens. 170 rooms, $$.

The Mayfair Hotel, Adelsgatan 4, 211 31 Malmö, ☎ 040-101-620, fax 040-101-625, www.mayfairtunneln.com, is a special little hotel with personal service, occupying one of the oldest buildings in the city center. Rooms are individually decorated. The sumptuous breakfast buffet is served in the medieval vaulted cellar restaurant. 68 rooms, $$.

STF Vandrarhem Malmö (hostel), Backavägen 18, ☎ 040-155-165, fax 040-510-659, www.malmohostel.com. In the southern part of the city, 3½ km (two miles) from the railway station. Not the most charming building, but the large garden is a plus. For 25 years, it has been a popular hostel with an international clientele. 173 beds, $.

Where to Eat

In summertime, the entire area around the Möllevågstorget and the Lilla Torget squares resembles one large outdoor restaurant. It's a treat to sample the many different cuisines offered here.

Rådhuskällaren on Stortorget, in the beautiful City Hall building, is a popular restaurant serving both lunch and dinner. Outdoor seating during the summer months.

Salt & Brygga, Sundspromenaden 7, is right by the water in Västra hamnen. A popular and stylish eatery, serving some of the best food in town.

Exploring the Area

Bokskogen (the beech forest), 15 km (nine miles) east of Malmö, blooms in the month of May. **Skåneleden**, a 900-km (558-mile) hiking trail starts here. The beautiful 16th-century castle, **Torups Slott**, offers guided tours from mid-May through June and the castle park is open to visitors year-round.

Drive across the **Öresundsbron** bridge that links Sweden and Denmark. This engineering miracle officially opened on July 1, 2000. The total distance is 16 km (10 miles). A minimalist marvel, it has four lanes for car traffic and a rail line for high-speed trains. It incorporates a man-made island where an underwater tunnel (on the Danish side) connects with the two-level bridge. The bridge makes it possible to drive the

entire length of Western Europe without having to pass through Russia. When this much-debated bridge was completed, the cost totalled US$3 billion.

Skanör and Falsterbo, two picturesque small resort towns with golf courses and sandy beaches, are perched on a promontory 32 km (20 miles) south of Malmö and merit a visit.

Öresundsbron bridge

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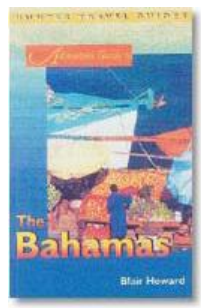

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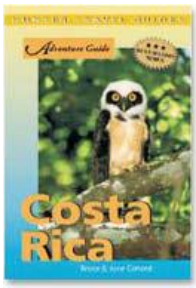

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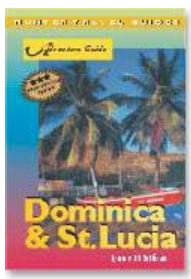

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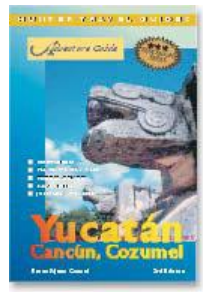

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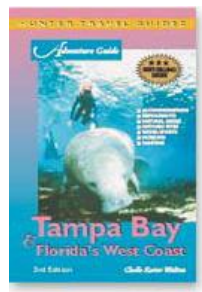

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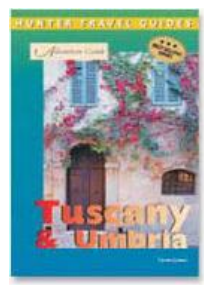

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PANAMA

Mother nature has bequeathed Panama with some stunning spots, rich soils and a vast bio-diversity. White- and black-sand beaches alternate with mangrove mazes along the coast. Sparkling wild rivers overflowing with trout run through jungle-clad canyons filled with colorful flowers. Mist-crowned Baru Volcano towers above them all. This book explores every region from tip to toe, including the San Blas Islands, offshore Barro Colorado, and urban Panama City, gateway for visitors. Walking tours visit historic forts, gold museums, classic city parks and bustling crafts markets. Special attention is given to the national parks. 6 x 9 pbk, 360 pp, $19.99, 1-58843-368-4

MEXICO'S GULF COAST

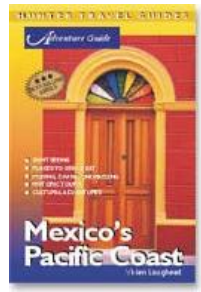
Joanie Sanchez

The area of Veracruz, Tabasco and north to the US border is a throwback to Mexico of old. It has volcanoes, rainforests, Maya ruins and such abundant wildlife that you will see hundreds of toucans and an island filled with monkeys. Experience the dance and music of Veracruz (birthplace of La Bamba), the fabulous local foods of Xalapa, the local festivals, the miles of pristine coastline, Mexico's tallest mountain, the sheer beauty of the jungles. Town and regional maps, color photos, fully indexed.

6 x 9 pbk, 400 pp, $19.99, 1-58843-394-3

MEXICO'S PACIFIC COAST

Vivien Lougheed

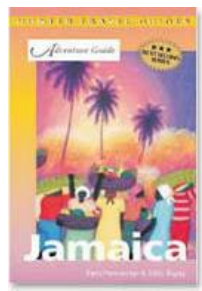


The Pacific coast of Mexico is a playground for active travelers. Warm waves and sunny skies attract the beach crowd with watersports, while volcanoes, mountains and jungles appeal to hikers, naturalists and the culturally curious. Visit a pearl farm in San Carlos, ride a train through Copper Canyon, go crocodile hunting on La Tovara River, surf the big waves at Playa Las Islitas, or visit the village of Ajejic, where DH Lawrence once got inspiration. Town and regional maps, color photos, fully indexed.

6 x 9 pbk, 500 pp, $19.99, 1-58843-395-1

JAMAICA 5th Edition

Paris Permenter & John Bigley



This travel guide walks with the adventurous traveler to the heart of Jamaica, to the miles of sand beaches, to the rugged Blue Mountains, to the country villages that provide a peek at the real Jamaica. The authors focus on the adventures this popular Caribbean island has to offer: scuba diving along coral reefs, biking mountain trails, deep sea fishing, parasailing, windsurfing, horseback riding, and other adventures that range from mild to wild. Special sections include a look at Jamaica's Meet the People program, home visits, local nightspots, festivals, and more. Maps and photos enliven the down-to-earth text.

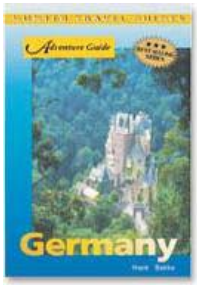
6 x 9 pbk, 360 pp, $18.99, 1-58843-504-0

NEW ZEALAND

Bette Flagler

Written by a local, this guide covers every region and town, with in-depth information on the Maori culture, the remarkable places to stay and eat, vineyard tours, cooking schools, thermal springs, albatross and whale encounters, scenic drives, and more. Canoe the Whanganui River, ride in a hot air balloon, hike the Waikaremoana Track, explore Whirikana Forest Park, take a glacier tour. There's even a section on how to talk Kiwi English! Color photos, maps and a thorough index.

6 x 9 pbk, 650 pp, $21.99, 1-58843-405-2



GERMANY

Henk Bekker

Bavaria, the Mosel Valley, the Rhine region, the Black Forest, Dresden, Berlin, Hamburg – this highly detailed guide covers every part of the country in depth. The author, a German resident, shows you how to experience the best, through town walks, drives in the countryside and immersing yourself in the entertainment, the sights, the history and culture. Hundreds of hotel and restaurant reviews. Maps, color photos, index.

6 x 9 pbk, 550 pp, $19.99, 1-58843-503-2

IRELAND

Tina Neylon

Ireland is steeped in history, tradition and culture, making it one of the most popular vacation destinations worldwide. Its story is told in centuries-old castles (some of which now welcome overnight guests); stone circles strategically placed to shine in the winter solstice moon; and, of course, in its pubs, where local residents gladly share a pint and a tale. Its cities are a treat to explore, with winding streets packed with tiny antique stores. Trips along the coast take you to traditional fishing villages and past some of the world's best golf courses. This book, written by an Ireland native, tells it all. Color photos.

6 x 9 pbk, 624 pp, $21.99, 1-58843-367-6

PARIS & ILE DE FRANCE

Heather Stimmler-Hall

Written by a Paris resident, here is every neighborhood of the city, the forests and parks, plus recommended day-trips to majestic châteaux and authentic medieval villages. Shopping adventures, wine and food, dance and drama, language and literature, nightlife and entertainment – the author shows you how to get involved in it all, whether through cooking classes, dance lessons, language courses, luxury spas or wine festivals. Town and regional maps, color photos, fully indexed.

6 x 9 pbk, 448 pp, $19.99, 1-58843-396-X

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